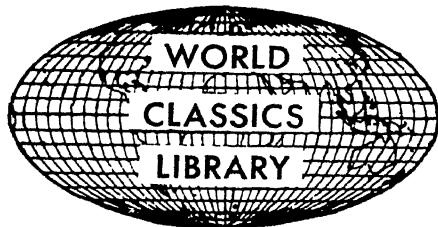


COLLECTED WORKS OF
ROBERT LOUIS
STEVENSON

Including *Treasure Island*,
Kidnapped, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*



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TREASURE ISLAND

PART I THE OLD BUCCANEER

I

THE OLD SEA DOG AT THE ADMIRAL BENBOW"

SQUIRE TRELAWSNEY, Dr Livesey, and the rest of these gentlemen having asked me to write down the whole particulars about Treasure Island from the beginning to the end keeping nothing back but the bearings of the island and that only because there is still treasure not yet lifted I take up my pen in the year of grace 17— and go back to the time when my father kept the Admiral Benbow inn and the brown old seaman, with the sabre cut, first took up his lodgings under our roof

I remember him as if it were yesterday as he came plodding to the inn door, his sea chest following behind him in a hand barrow, a tall strong heavy nut brown man his tarry pigtail falling over the shoulders of his soiled blue coat his hands fagged and scarred with black broken nails and the sabre cut across one cheek a dirty livid white I remember him looking round the cove and whistling to himself as he did so and then breaking out in that old sea-song that he sang so often afterwards —

*"Fifteen men on The Dead Man's Chest—
Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!"*

in the high old tottering voice that seemed to have been tuned and broken at the capstan bars Then he rapped on the door with a bit of stick like a handspike that he carried and when my father appeared called roughly for a glass of rum This when it was brought to him he drank slowly like a connoisseur lingering on the taste, and still looking about him at the cliffs and up at our signboard

This is a handy cove ' says he, at length, ' and a pleasant sittiyated grog-shop Much company mate'

My father told him no very little company the more was the pity

Well then said he this is the berth for me Here you matey he cried to the man who trundled the barrow bring up alongside and help up my chest I'll stay here a bit, he continued I'm a plain man rum and bacon and eggs is what I want and that head up there for to watch ships off What you mought call me? You mought call me captain Oh I see what you're at—there' and he threw down three or four gold pieces on the threshold You can tell me when I've worked through that says he looking as fierce as a commander

And indeed bad as his clothes were and coarsely as he spoke, he had none of the appearance of a man who sailed before the mast but seemed like a mate or skipper accustomed to be obeyed or to strike The man who came with the barrow told us the mail had set him down the morning before at the

Royal George' that he had inquired what inns there were along the coast, and hearing ours well spoken of, I suppose and described as lonely had chosen it from the others for his place of residence And that was all we could learn of our guest

He was a very silent man by custom All day he hung round the cove or upon the cliffs with a brass telescope all evening he sat in a corner of the parlour next the fire and drank rum and water very strong Mostly he would not speak when spoken to only look up sudden and fierce and blow through his nose like a fog horn and we and the people who came about our house soon learned to let him be Every day when he came back from his stroll he would ask if any seafaring men had gone by along the road? At first we thought it was the want of company of his own kind that made him ask this question, but at last we began to see he was desirous to avoid them When a seaman put up at the Admiral Benbow (as now and then some did making by the coast road for Bristol) he would look in at him through the curtained door before he entered the parlour and he was always sure to be as silent as a mouse when any such was present For me at least there was no secret about the matter for I was in a way a sharer in his alarms He had taken me aside one day and promised me a silver fourpenny on the first of every month if I would only keep my weather-eye open for a seafaring man with one leg, and let him know the moment he appeared Often enough when the first of the month came round and I applied to him for my wage he would only blow through his nose at me and stare me down but before the week was out he was sure to think better of it bring me my fourpenny piece and repeat his orders to look out for the seafaring man with one leg

How that personage haunted my dreams I need scarcely tell you On stormy nights when the wind shook the four corners of the house and the surf roared along the cove and up the cliffs I would see him in a thousand forms and with a thousand diabolical expressions Now the leg would be cut off at the knee now at the hip now he was a monstrous kind of a creature who had but the one leg and that in the middle of his body To see him leap and run and pursue me over hedge and ditch was the worst of nightmares And altogether I paid pretty dear for my monthly fourpenny piece in the shape of these abominable fancies

But though I was so terrified by the idea of the seafaring man with one leg I was far less afraid of the captain himself than anybody else who knew him There were nights when he took a deal more rum and water than his head would carry and then he would sometimes sit and sing his wicked old wild sea songs minding nobody but sometimes he would call for glasses round and force all the trembling company to listen to his stories or bear a chorus to his singing Often I have heard the house shaking with Yo ho ho and a bottle of rum all the neighbours joining in each singing louder than the other to avoid remark For in these fits he was the most over-riding companion ever known he would slap his hand on the table for silence all round, he would fly up in a passion of anger at a question or sometimes because none was put, and so he judged the company was not following his story Nor

would he allow anyone to leave the inn till he had drunk himself sleepy and reeled off to bed

His stories were what frightened people worst of all Dreadful stories they were about hanging and walking the plank and storms at sea and the Dry Tortugas and wild deeds and places on the Spanish Main By his own account he must have lived his life among some of the wickedest men that God ever allowed upon the sea and the language in which he told these stories shocked our plain country people almost as much as the crimes that he described My father was always saying the inn would be ruined for people would soon cease coming there to be tyrannised over and put down and sent shivering to their beds but I really believe his presence did us good People were frightened at the time but on looking back they rather liked it it was a fine excitement in a quiet country life and there was even a party of the younger men who pretended to admire him calling him a true sea dog and a real old salt and such like names and saying there was the sort of man that made England terrible at sea

In one way indeed he bade fair to ruin us for he kept on staying week after week and at last month after month so that all the money had been long exhausted and still my father never plucked up the heart to insist on having more If ever he mentioned it the captain blew through his nose so loudly that you might say he roared and stared my poor father out of the room I have seen him wringing his hands after such a rebuff and I am sure the annoyance and the terror he lived in must have greatly hastened his early and unhappy death

All the time he lived with us the captain made no change whatever in his dress but to buy some stockings from a hawker One of the cocks of his hat having fallen down he let it hang from that day forth though it was a great annoyance when it blew I remember the appearance of his coat which he patched himself upstairs in his room and which before the end was nothing but patches He never wrote or received a letter and he never spoke with any but the neighbours and with these for the most part only when drunk on rum The great sea chest none of us had ever seen open

He was only once crossed and that was towards the end when my poor father was far gone in a decline that took him off Dr Livesey came late one afternoon to see the patient took a bit of dinner from my mother and went into the parlour to smoke a pipe until his horse should come down from the hamlet for we had no stabling at the old Benbow I followed him in and I remember observing the contrast the neat bright doctor with his powder as white as snow and his bright black eyes and pleasant manners made with the coltish country folk and above all, with that filthy heavy bleared scarecrow of a pirate of ours sitting far gone in rum with his arms on the table Suddenly he—the captain that is—began to pipe up his eternal song —

*“Fifteen men on The Dead Man’s Chest—
Yo ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!
Drink and the devil had done for the rest—
Yo ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!”*

At first I had supposed 'the dead man's chest' to be that identical big box of his upstairs in the front room and the thought had been mingled in my night mares with that of the one legged seafaring man. But by this time we had all long ceased to pay any particular notice to the song, it was new that night to nobody but Dr Livesey, and on him I observed it did not produce an agreeable effect for he looked up for a moment quite angrily before he went on with his talk to old Taylor the gardener, on a new cure for the rheumatics. In the meantime the captain gradually brightened up at his own music and at last flapped his hand upon the table before him in a way we all knew to mean—silence. The voices stopped at once all but Dr Livesey's he went on as before speaking clear and kind and drawing briskly at his pipe between every word or two. The captain glared at him for a while flapped his hand again glared still harder and at last broke out with a villainous low oath. Silence there, between decks!

"Were you addressing me, sir?" says the doctor and when the ruffian had told him with another oath that this was so I have only one thing to say to you, sir" replies the doctor "that if you keep on drinking rum the world will soon be quit of a very dirty scoundrel!"

The old fellow's fury was awful. He sprang to his feet drew and opened a sailor's clasp-knife, and balancing it open on the palm of his hand threatened to pin the doctor to the wall.

The doctor never so much as moved. He spoke to him as before over his shoulder and in the same tone of voice rather high so that all the room might hear but perfectly calm and steady—

If you do not put that knife this instant in your pocket, I promise upon my honour you shall hang at next assizes.

Then followed a battle of looks between them but the captain soon knuckled under put up his weapon, and resumed his seat, grumbling like a beaten dog.

And now, sir continued the doctor 'since I now know there's such a fellow in my district, you may count I'll have an eye upon you day and night. I'm not a doctor only, I'm a magistrate, and if I catch a breath of complaint against you if it's only a piece of incivility like to night's I'll take effectual means to have you hunted down and routed out of this. Let that suffice.'

Soon after Dr Livesey's horse came to the door and he rode away but the captain held his peace that evening and for many evenings to come.

II

BLACK DOG APPEARS AND DISAPPEARS

IT WAS NOT VERY LONG after this that there occurred the first of the mysterious events that rid us at last of the captain though not as you will see of his affairs. It was a bitter cold winter with long hard frosts and heavy gales, and it was plain from the first that my poor father was little likely to see the spring

He sank daily and my mother and I had all the inn upon our hands, and were kept busy enough without paying much regard to our unpleasant guest

It was one January morning very early—a pinching, frosty morning—the cove all grey with hoar frost the ripple lapping softly on the stones the sun still low and only touching the hilltops and shining far to seaward The captain had risen earlier than usual and set out down the beach his cutlass swinging under the broad skirts of the old blue coat his brass telescope under his arm, his hat tilted back upon his head I remember his breath hanging like smoke in his wake as he strode off and the last sound I heard of him, as he turned the big rock was a loud snort of indignation as though his mind was still running upon Dr Livesey

Well mother was upstairs with father and I was laying the breakfast table against the captain's return when the parlour door opened and a man stepped in on whom I had never set my eyes before He was a pale tallowy creature, wanting two fingers of the left hand and though he wore a cutlass he did not look much like a fighter I had always my eye open for seafaring men with one leg or two and I remember this one puzzled me He was not sailorly and yet he had a smack of the sea about him too

I asked him what was for his service and he said he would take rum, but as I was going out of the room to fetch it he sat down upon a table and motioned me to draw near I paused where I was with my napkin in my hand

Come here sonny' says he Come nearer here

I took a step nearer

Is this here table for my mate Bill? he asked with a kind of leer

I told him I did not know his mate Bill and this was for a person who stayed in our house whom we called the captain

Well said he my mate Bill would be called the captain as like as not. He has a cut on one cheek and a mighty pleasant way with him particularly in drink has my mate Bill We'll put it for argument like that your captain has a cut on one cheek—and we'll put it if you like that that cheek's the right one Ah well! I told you Now is my mate Bill in this here house?

I told him he was out walking

Which way sonny? Which way is he gone?

And when I had pointed out the rock and told him how the captain was likely to return and how soon and answered a few other questions Ah said he thus'll be as good as a drink to my mate Bill'

The expression on his face as he said these words was not at all pleasant and I had my own reasons for thinking that the stranger was mistaken even supposing he meant what he said But it was no affair of mine I thought and besides it was difficult to know what to do The stranger kept hanging about just inside the inn door peering round the corner like a cat waiting for a mouse Once I stepped out myself into the road but he immediately called me back and as I did not obey quick enough for his fancy, a most horrible change came over his tallowy face and he ordered me in with an oath that made me jump As soon as I was back again he returned to his former manner half fawning half sneering patted me on the shoulder, told me I was a good boy,

and he had taken quite a fancy to me I have a son of my own said he as like you as two blocks and he's all the pride of my art But the great thing for boys is discipline sonny—discipline Now if you had sailed along of Bill you wouldn't have stood there to be spoke to twice—not you That was never Bill's way, nor the way of such as sailed with him And here sure enough is my mate Bill with a spy glass under his arm bless his old art to be sure You and me I'll just go back into the parlour sonny and get behind the door and we'll give Bill a little surprise—bless his 'art I say again

So saying the stranger backed along with me into the parlour and put me behind him in the corner so that we were both hidden by the open door I was very uneasy and alarmed as you may fancy and it rather added to my fears to observe that the stranger was certainly frightened himself He cleared the hilt of his cutlass and loosened the blade in the sheath and all the time we were waiting there he kept swallowing as if he felt what we used to call a lump in the throat

At last in strode the captain slammed the door behind him without looking to the right or left and marched straight across the room to where his break fast awaited him

'Bill said the stranger in a voice that I thought he had tried to make bold and big

The captain spun round on his heel and fronted us, all the brown had gone out of his face and even his nose was blue he had the look of a man who sees a ghost or the evil one or something worse if any thing can be and, upon my word I felt sorry to see him all in a moment turn so old and sick

Come Bill you know me you know an old shipmate Bill surely, said the stranger

The captain made a sort of gasp

Black Dog!" said he

And who else? returned the other getting more at his ease 'Black Dog as ever was come for to see his old shipmate Billy at the Admiral Benbow inn Ah Bill Bill we have seen a sight of times us two, since I lost them two talons holding up his mutilated hand

Now, look here said the captain, 'you've run me down here I am, then speak up what is it?

That's you Bill returned Black Dog 'you're in the right of it Billy I'll have a glass of rum from this dear child here as I've tool such a liking to, and we'll sit down if you please and talk square like old shipmates

When I returned with the rum they were already seated on either side of the captain's breakfast table—Black Dog next to the door, and sitting sideways so as to have one eye on his old shipmate and one, as I thought on his retreat

He bade me go and leave the door wide open 'None of your eyeholes for me sonny he said and I left them together and retired into the bar

For a long time though I certainly did my best to listen, I could hear nothing but a low gabbling but at last the voices began to grow higher, and I could pick up a word or two, mostly oaths from the captain

'No no no no and an end of it!' he cried once And again, If it comes to swinging swing all say I

Then all of a sudden there was a tremendous explosion of oaths and other noises—the chair and table went over in a lump a clash of steel followed and then a cry of pain and the next instant I saw Black Dog in full flight and the captain hotly pursuing both with drawn cutlasses and the former streaming blood from the left shoulder Just at the door the captain aimed at the fugitive one last tremendous cut which would certainly have split him to the chine had it not been intercepted by our big signboard of Admiral Benbow You may see the notch on the lower side of the frame to this day

The blow was the last of the battle Once out upon the road Black Dog in spite of his wound showed a wonderful clean pair of heels and disappeared over the edge of the hill in half a minute The captain for his part stood staring at the signboard like a bewildered man Then he passed his hand over his eyes several times and at last turned back into the house

Jim says he rum and as he spoke, he reeled a little, and caught himself with one hand against the wall

Are you hurt? cried I

Rum he repeated I must get away from here Rum! rum!"

I ran to fetch it but I was quite unsteady by all that had fallen out and I broke one glass and fouled the tap and while I was still getting in my own way I heard a loud fall in the parlour and running in beheld the captain lying full length upon the floor At the same instant my mother alarmed by the cries and fighting came running downstairs to help me Between us we raised his head He was breathing very loud and hard but his eyes were closed, and his face a horrible colour

Dear deary me! cried my mother what a disgrace upon the house! And your poor father sick!

In the meantime we had no idea what to do to help the captain nor any other thought but that he had got his death hurt in the scuffle with the stranger I got the rum to be sure and tried to put it down his throat but his teeth were tightly shut and his jaws as strong as iron It was a happy relief for us when the door opened and Doctor Livesey came in on his visit to my father

Oh doctor we cried what shall we do? Where is he wounded?

Wounded? A fiddle stick's end! said the doctor No more wounded than you or I The man has had a stroke as I warned him Now Mrs Hawkins, just you run upstairs to your husband and tell him if possible nothing about it For my part I must do my best to save this fellow's trebly worthless life and Jim here will get me a basin

When I got back with the basin the doctor had already ripped up the captain's sleeve and exposed his great sinewy arm It was tattooed in several places Here's luck A fair wind and Billy Bones his fancy were very neatly and clearly executed on the forearm and up near the shoulder there was a sketch of a gallows and a man hanging from it—done as I thought, with great spirit

"Prophetic" said the doctor touching this picture with his finger "And now Master Billy Bones, if that be your name we'll have a look at the colour of your blood Jim he said 'are you afraid of blood?'

"No sir, said I

"Well then said he, "you hold the basin," and with that he took his lancet and opened a vein

A great deal of blood was taken before the captain opened his eyes and looked mistily about him. First he recognised the doctor with an unmistakable frown then his glance fell upon me and he looked relieved. But suddenly his colour changed and he tried to raise himself crying —

Where's Black Dog?"

"There is no Black Dog here said the doctor except what you have on your own back. You have been drinking rum, you have had a stroke precisely as I told you and I have just, very much against my own will dragged you headforemost out of the grave. Now Mr Bones—

That's not my name he interrupted

Much I care returned the doctor "It's the name of a buccaneer of my acquaintance, and I call you by it for the sake of shortness and what I have to say to you is this one glass of rum won't kill you, but if you take one you'll take another and another and I stake my wig if you don't break off short, you'll die—do you understand that?—die and go to your own place like the man in the Bible. Come, now, make an effort I'll help you to your bed for once

Between us with much trouble we managed to hoist him upstairs and laid him on his bed where his head fell back on the pillow as if he were almost fainting

Now, mind you," said the doctor, "I clear my conscience—the name of rum for you is death

And with that he went off to see my father taking me with him by the arm

This is nothing' he said as soon as he had closed the door I have drawn blood enough to keep him quiet a while he should lie for a week where he is—that is the best thing for him and you, but another stroke would settle him'

III

THE BLACK SPOT

ABOUT NOON I stopped at the captain's door with some cooling drinks and medicines. He was lying very much as we had left him, only a little higher and he seemed both weak and excited

Jim he said, you're the only one here that's worth anything and you know I've been always good to you. Never a month but I've given you a silver fourpenny for yourself. And now you see, mate I'm pretty low and deserted by all and Jim, you'll bring me one noggan of rum won't you matey?"

"The doctor——" I began

But he broke in cursing the doctor in a feeble voice but heartily 'Doctors is all swabs he said and that doctor there why what do he know about seafaring men? I been in places hot as pitch and mates dropping round with Yellow Jack and the blessed land a heaving like the sea with earthquakes—what do the doctor know of lands like that?—and I lived on rum I tell you It's been meat and drink and man and wife to me and if I'm not to have my rum now I'm a poor old hulk on a lee shore my blood'll be on you Jim and that doctor swab and he ran on again for a while with curses Look Jim, how my fingers fidget he continued in the pleading tone I can't keep em still not I I haven't had a drop this blessed day That doctor's a fool I tell you If I don't have a dram o' rum Jim I'll have the horrors I seen some on em already I seen old Flint there in the corner behind you as plain as print, I seen him, and if I get the horrors I'm a man that has lived rough and I'll raise Cain Your doctor hisself said one glass wouldn't hurt me I'll give you a golden guinea for a noggan Jim

He was growing more and more excited and this alarmed me for my father who was very low that day and needed quiet besides I was reassured by the doctor's words now quoted to me and rather offended by the offer of a bribe

I want none of your money,' said I but what you owe my father I'll get you one glass and no more

When I brought it to him he seized it greedily and drank it out

Ay ay said he that's some better sure enough And now, matey, did that doctor say how long I was to lie here in this old berth?

A week at least said I

Thunder! he cried A week! I can't do that they'd have the black spot on me by then The lubbers is going about to get the wind of me this blessed moment lubbers as cou'dn't keep what they got, and want to nail what is another's Is that seamanly behaviour now I want to know? But I'm a saving soul I never wasted good money of mine nor lost it neither and I'll trick em again I'm not afraid on em I'll shake out another reef, matey, and daddle em again

As he was thus speaking he had risen from bed with great difficulty holding to my shoulder with a grip that almost made me cry out and moving his legs like so much dead weight His words spirited as they were in meaning contrasted sadly with the weakness of the voice in which they were uttered He paused when he had got into a sitting position on the edge

That doctor's done me he murmured My ears is singing Lay me back"

Before I could do much to help him he had fallen back again to his former place where he lay for a while silent

Jim, he said at length you saw that seafaring man to-day?"

Black Dog? I asked

Ah! Black Dog says he 'He's a bad un, but there's worse that put him on Now if I can't get away nohow, and they tip me the black spot mind you,

it's my old sea chest they're after you get on a horse—you can can't you Well then you get on a horse and go to—well yes I will—to that eternal doctor swab and tell him to pipe all hands—magistrates and such—and he'll lay 'em aboard at the Admiral Benbow—all old Flint's crew man and boy all on 'em that's left I was first mate, I was, old Flint's first mate and I'm the only one as knows the place He gave it me to Savannah when he liv a dying like as if I was to now, you see But you won't peach unless they get the black spot on me or unless you see that Black Dog again, or a seafaring man with one leg Jim—him above all

But what is the black spot captain?" I asked

That's a summons mate I'll tell you if they get that But you keep your weather eye open Jim and I'll share with you equals upon my honour

He wandered a little longer his voice growing weaker, but soon after I had given him his medicine which he took like a child with the remark If ever a seaman wanted drugs it's me he fell at last into a heavy, swoon like sleep in which I left him What I should have done had all gone well I do not know Probably I should have told the whole story to the doctor for I was in mortal fear lest the captain should repent of his confessions and make an end of me But as things fell out my poor father died quite suddenly that evening which put all other matters on one side Our natural distress the visits of the neighbours the arranging of the funeral and all the work of the inn to be carried on in the meanwhile kept me so busy that I had scarcely time to think of the captain far less to be afraid of him

He got downstairs next morning to be sure and had his meals as usual though he ate little and had more I am afraid than his usual supply of rum for he helped himself out of the bar scowling and blowing through his nose and no one dared to cross him On the night before the funeral he was as drunk as ever, and it was shocking in that house of mourning to hear him singing away at his ugly old sea song but weak is he was we were all in the fear of death for him and the doctor was suddenly taken up with a case many miles away, and was never near the house after my father's death I have said the captain was weak and indeed he seemed rather to grow weaker than regain his strength He clambered up and down stairs and went from the parlour to the bar and back again and sometimes put his nose out of doors to smell the sea holding on to the walls as he went for support and breathing hard and fast like a man on a steep mountain He never particularly addressed me and it is my belief he had as good as forgotten his confidences but his temper was more flighty and allowing for his bodily weakness more violent than ever He had an alarming way now when he was drunk of drawing his cutlass and laying it bare before him on the table But with all that he minded people less and seemed shut up in his own thoughts and rather wandering Once for instance to our extreme wonder he piped up to a different air a kind of country love song that he must have learned in his youth before he had begun to follow the sea

So things passed until the day after the funeral, and about three o'clock of a bitter foggy frosty afternoon I was standing at the door for a moment full

of sad thoughts about my father when I saw someone drawing slowly near along the road He was plainly blind for he tapped before him with a stick and wore a great green shade over his eyes and nose and he was hunched as if with age or weakness and wore a huge old tattered sea-cloak with a hood that made him appear positively deformed I never saw in my life a more dreadful looking figure He stopped a little from the inn and raising his voice in an odd sing song addressed the air in front of him —

‘Will any kind friend inform a poor blind man, who has lost the precious sight of his eyes in the gracious defence of his native country England and God bless King George!—where or in what part of this country he may now be?’

You are at the Admiral Benbow,’ Black Hill Cove my good man ’ said I

I hear a voice said he— a young voice Will you give me your hand my kind young friend and lead me in?

I held out my hand and the horrible, soft spoken eyeless creature gripped it in a moment like a vice I was so much startled that I struggled to withdraw, but the blind man pulled me close up to him with a single action of his arm.

Now boy he said take me in to the captain

“Sir said I ‘upon my word I dare not

‘Oh he sneered that’s it! Take me in straight or I’ll break your arm”

And he gave it as he spoke a wrench that made me cry out

Sir I said it is for yourself I mean The captain is not what he used to be He sits with a drawn cutlass Another gentleman—

Come now march interrupted he and I never heard a voice so cruel, and cold and ugly as that blind man’s It cowed me more than the pain and I began to obey him at once walking straight in at the door and towards the parlour where our sick old buccaneer was sitting dazed with rum The blind man clung close to me holding me in one iron fist and leaning almost more of his weight on me than I could carry Lead me straight up to him and when I’m in view cry out Here’s a friend for you Bill If you don’t I’ll do this and with that he gave me a twitch that I thought would have made me faint Between this and that I was so utterly terrified of the blind beggar that I forgot my terror of the captain and as I opened the parlour door cried out the words he had ordered in a trembling voice

The poor captain raised his eyes and at one look the rum went out of him and left him staring sober The expression of his face was not so much of terror as of mortal sickness He made a movement to rise but I do not believe he had enough force left in his body

‘Now Bill sit where you are said the beggar If I can’t see I can hear a finger stirring Business is business Hold out your right hand Boy take his right hand by the wrist and bring it near to my right

We both obeyed him to the letter and I saw him pass something from the hollow of the hand that held his stick into the palm of the captain’s which closed upon it instantly

And now that’s done said the blind man and at the words he suddenly left hold of me and with incredible accuracy and nimbleness skipped out of

the parlour and into the road where as I still stood motionless I could hear his stick go tap tap tapping into the distance

It was some time before either I or the captain seemed to gather our senses but at length, and about at the same moment, I released his wrist which I was still holding and he drew in his hand and looked sharply into the palm

Ten o'clock' he cried Six hours Well do them yet and he sprang to his feet

Even as he did so he reeled put his hand to his throat stood swaying for a moment and then with a peculiar sound fell from his whole height face foremost to the floor

I ran to him at once calling to my mother But haste was all in vain The captain had been struck dead by thundering apoplexy It is a curious thing to understand for I had certainly never liked the man though of late I had begun to pity him but as soon as I saw that he was dead I burst into a flood of tears It was the second death I had known, and the sorrow of the first was still fresh in my heart

IV

THE SEA CHEST

I LOST NO TIME of course in telling my mother all that I knew and perhaps should have told her long before and we saw ourselves at once in a difficult and dangerous position Some of the man's money—if he had any—was certainly due to us but it was not likely that our captain's shipmates above all the two specimens seen by me Black Dog and the blind beggar would be inclined to give up their booty in payment of the dead man's debts The captain's order to mount at once and ride for Doctor Livesey would have left my mother alone and unprotected which was not to be thought of Indeed it seemed impossible for either of us to remain much longer in the house the fall of coals in the kitchen grate, the very ticking of the clocks filled us with alarms The neighbourhood to our ears seemed haunted by approaching footsteps, and what between the dead body of the captain on the parlour floor and the thought of that detestable blind beggar hovering near at hand and ready to return there were moments when as the saying goes I jumped in my skin for terror Something must speedily be resolved upon and it occurred to us at last to go forth together and seek help in the neighbouring hamlet No sooner said than done Bare headed as we were we ran out at once in the gathering evening and the frosty fog

The hamlet lay not many hundred yards away though out of view, on the other side of the next cove and what greatly encouraged me it was in an opposite direction from that whence the blind man had made his appearance, and whether he had presumably returned We were not many minutes on the road, though we sometimes stopped to lay hold of each other and hearken. But there was no unusual sound—nothing but the low wash of the ripple and the croaking of the crows in the wood

It was already candle-light when we reached the hamlet and I shall never forget how much I was cheered to see the yellow shine in doors and windows, but that as it proved was the best of the help we were likely to get in that quarter For—you would have thought men would have been ashamed of themselves—no soul would consent to return with us to the Admiral Benbow' The more we told of our troubles the more—man woman and child—they clung to the shelter of their houses The name of Captain Flint though it was strange to me was well enough known to some there and carried a great weight of terror Some of the men who had been to field work on the far side of the Admiral Benbow remembered besides, to have seen several strangers on the road and taking them to be smugglers to have bolted away, and one at least had seen a little lugger in what we called Kitt's Hole For that matter anyone who was a comrade of the captain's was enough to frighten them to death And the short and the long of the matter was that while we could get several who were willing enough to ride to Dr Livesey's which lay in another direction not one would help us to defend the inn

They say cowardice is infectious but then argument is on the other hand a great emboldener and so when each had said his say my mother made them a speech She would not she declared lose money that belonged to her father less boy if none of the rest of you dare she said Jim and I dare Back we will go the way we came and small thanks to you big hulking chicken hearted men Well have that chest open if we die for it And I'll thank you for that bag Mrs Crossley to bring back our lawful money in

Of course I said I would go with my mother and of course they all cried out at our foolhardiness but even then not a man would go along with us All they would do was to give me a loaded pistol lest we were attacked and to promise to have horses ready saddled in case we were pursued on our return while one lad was to ride forward to the doctors in search of armed assistance

My heart was beating finely when we two set forth in the cold night upon this dangerous venture A full moon was beginning to rise and peered redly through the upper edges of the fog and this increased our haste for it was plain before we came forth again that all would be as bright as day and our departure exposed to the eyes of any watchers We slipped along the hedges, noiseless and swift nor did we see or hear anything to increase our terrors till to our huge relief the door of the Admiral Benbow had closed behind us

I slipped the bolt at once and we stood and panted for a moment in the dark alone in the house with the dead captain's body Then my mother got a candle in the bar and holding each other's hands we advanced into the parlour He lay as we had left him on his back with his eyes open and one arm stretched out

Draw down the blind Jim whispered my mother they might come and watch outside And now said she when I had done so we have to get the key off *that*, and who's to touch it I should like to know' and she gave a kind of sob as she said the words

I went down on my knees at once On the floor close to his hand there was a little round paper blackened on the one side I could not doubt that this

was the *black spot*, and taking it up I found written on the other side, in a very good clear hand this short message You have till ten to night

He had till ten mother said I and just as I said it our old clock began striking This sudden noise startled us shockingly but the news was good for it was only six

Now Jim she said that key

I felt in his pockets one after another A few small coins a thimble and some thread and big needles a piece of pigtail tobacco bitten away at the end his gully with a crooked handle a pocket compass and a tinder box were all that they contained and I began to despair

Perhaps it's round his neck suggested my mother

Overcoming a strong repugnance I tore open his shirt at the neck and there, sure enough hanging to a bit of tarry string which I cut with his own gully we found the key At this triumph we were filled with hope and hurried upstairs without delay to the little room where he had slept so long and where his box had stood since the day of his arrival

It was like any other seaman's chest on the outside the initial B burned on the top of it with a hot iron and the corners somewhat smashed and broken as by long rough usage

Give me the key said my mother and though the lock was very stiff, she had turned it and thrown back the lid in a twinkling

A strong smell of tobacco and tar rose from the interior but nothing was to be seen on the top except a suit of very good clothes carefully brushed and folded They had never been worn my mother said Under that the miscellany began—a quadrant a tin canikin several sticks of tobacco two brace of very handsome pistols a piece of bar silver an old Spanish watch and some other trinkets of little value and mostly of foreign make a pair of compasses mounted with brass and five or six curious West Indian shells It has often set me thinking since that he should have carried about these shells with him in his wandering guilty and hunted life

In the meantime we had found nothing of any value but the silver and the trinkets and neither of these were in our way Underneath there was an old boat cloak whitened with sea salt on many a harbour bar My mother pulled it up with impatience and there lay before us the last things in the chest a bundle tied up in oilcloth and looking like papers and a canvas bag that gave forth at a touch the jingle of gold

I'll show these rogues that I'm an honest woman said my mother I'll have my dues and not a farthing over Hold Mrs Crossley's bag And she began to count over the amount of the captain's score from the sailor's bag into the one that I was holding

It was a long difficult business for the coins were of all countries and sizes—doubloons and louis d'ors and guineas and pieces of eight and I know not what besides all shaken together at random The guineas too were about the rarest, and it was with these only that my mother knew how to make her court

When we were about half way through, I suddenly put my hand upon her

arm, for I had heard in the silent frosty air a sound that brought my heart into my mouth—the tap tapping of the blind man's stick upon the frozen road. It drew nearer and nearer while we sat holding our breath. Then it struck sharp on the inn door and then we could hear the handle being turned and the bolt rattling as the wretched being tried to enter and then there was a long time of silence both within and without. At last the tapping re-commenced, and to our indescribable joy and gratitude died slowly away again until it ceased to be heard.

Mother, said I 'take the whole and let's be going for I was sure the bolted door must have seemed suspicious and would bring the whole hornets' nest about our ears though how thankful I was that I had bolted it none could tell who had never met that terrible blind man.

But my mother frightened as she was would not consent to take a fraction more than was due to her and was obstinately unwilling to be content with less. It was not yet seven she said by a long way she knew her rights and she would have them and she was still arguing with me when a little low whistle sounded a good way off upon the hill. That was enough and more than enough, for both of us.

I'll take what I have she said jumping to her feet.

'And I'll take this to square the count said I picking up the oilskin packet.

Next moment we were both groping downstairs leaving the candle by the empty chest and the next we had opened the door and were in full retreat. We had not started a moment too soon. The fog was rapidly dispersing already the moon shone quite clear on the high ground on either side and it was only in the exact bottom of the dell and round the tavern door that a thin veil still hung unbroken to conceal the first steps of our escape. Far less than half-way to the hamlet, very little beyond the bottom of the hill we must come forth into the moonlight. Nor was this all for the sound of several footsteps running came already to our ears and as we looked back in their direction a light tossing to and fro and still rapidly advancing showed that one of the new-comers carried a lantern.

"My dear said my mother suddenly take the money and run on I am going to faint.

This was certainly the end for both of us I thought. How I cursed the cowardice of the neighbours how I blamed my poor mother for her honesty and her greed for her past foolhardiness and present weakness! We were just at the little bridge by good fortune and I helped her tottering as she was to the edge of the bank where sure enough she gave a sigh and fell on my shoulder. I do not know how I found the strength to do it at all and I am afraid it was roughly done but I managed to drag her down the bank and a little way under the arch. Farther I could not move her for the bridge was too low to let me do more than crawl below it. So there we had to stay—my mother almost entirely exposed, and both of us within earshot of the inn.

V

THE LAST OF THE BLIND MAN

MY CURIOSITY, in a sense was stronger than my fear for I could not remain where I was but crept back to the bank again whence sheltering my head behind a bush of broom I might command the road before our door I was scarcely in position ere my enemies began to arrive seven or eight of them, running hard their feet beating out of time along the road and the man with the lantern some paces in front Three men ran together hand in hand and I made out even through the mist that the middle man of this trio was the blind beggar The next moment his voice showed me that I was right

Down with the door! he cried

‘Ay ay sir’ answered two or three and a rush was made upon the “Admiral Benbow” the lantern bearer following and then I could see them pause, and hear speeches passed in a lower key as if they were surprised to find the door open But the pause was brief for the blind man again issued his commands His voice sounded louder and higher, as if he were afire with eagerness and rage

In, in in! he shouted and cursed them for their delay

Four or five of them obeyed at once two remaining on the road with the formidable beggar There was a pause then a cry of surprise, and then a voice shouting from the house —

Bill’s dead!

But the blind man swore at them again for their delay

‘Search him some of you shirking lubbers and the rest of you aloft and get the chest he cried

I could hear their feet rattling up our old stairs so that the house must have shook with it Promptly afterwards fresh sounds of astonishment arose the window of the captain’s room was thrown open with a slam and a jingle of broken glass, and a man leaned out into the moonlight head and shoulders, and addressed the blind beggar on the road below him

Pew he cried, they’ve been before us Someone’s turned the chest out aloft and aloft

Is it there? roared Pew

‘The money’s there

The blind man cursed the money

Flint’s fist, I mean he cried

We don’t see it here nohow,” returned the man

Here you below there is it on Bill? cried the blind man again

At that, another fellow probably him who had remained below to search the captain’s body came to the door of the inn Bill’s been overhauled a ready said he nothin left

It’s these people of the inn—it’s that boy I wish I had put his eyes out!

cried the blind man Pew They were here no time ago—they had the door bolted when I tried it Scatter lads and find 'em

Sure enough they left their glim here said the fellow from the window Scatter and find em' Rout the house out' reiterated Pew striking with his stick upon the road

Then there followed a great to do through all our old inn heavy feet pounding to and fro furniture thrown over doors kicked in until the very rocks re echoed and the men came out again one after another, on the road, and declared that we were nowhere to be found And just then the same whistle that had alarmed my mother and myself over the dead captain's money was once more clearly audible through the night but this time twice repeated I had thought it to be the blind man's trumpet so to speak summoning his crew to the assault but I now found that it was a signal from the hillside towards the hamlet and from its effect upon the buccaneers a signal to warn them of approaching danger

There's Dick again" said one Twice! We'll have to budge mates

Budge, you skulk! cried Pew Dick was a fool and a coward from the first—you wouldn't mind him They must be close by they can't be far you have your hands on it Scatter and look for them, dogs! Oh, shiver my soul he cried if I had eyes!

This appeal seemed to produce some effect for two of the fellows began to look here and there among the lumber but half heartedly I thought and with half an eye to their own danger all the time while the rest stood irresolute on the road

You have your hands on thousands you fools and you hang a leg! You'd be as rich as kings if you could find it and you know it's here and you stand there malingerer There wasn't one of you dared face Bill and I did it—a blind man! And I'm to lose my chance through you! I'm to be a poor crawling beggar, sponging for rum when I might be rolling in a coach! If you had the pluck of a weevil in a biscuit you would catch them still

Hang it Pew we've got the doubloons! grumbled one

'They might have hid the blessed thing said another Take the Georges, Pew and don't stand here squalling

Squalling was the word for it Pew's anger rose so high at these objections till at last his passion completely taking the upper hand he struck at them right and left in his blindness and his stick sounded heavily on more than one

These in their turn cursed back at the blind miscreant threatened him in horrid terms and tried in vain to catch the stick and wrest it from his grasp

This quarrel was the saving of us for while it was still raging another sound came from the top of the hill on the side of the hamlet—the tramp of horses galloping Almost at the same time a pistol shot flash and report came from the hedge side And that was plainly the last signal of danger for the buccaneers turned at once and ran separating in every direction one seaward along the cove one slant across the hill and so on so that in half a minute not a sign of them remained but Pew Him they had deserted whether in sheer panic or out of revenge for his ill words and blows I know not but there he

remained behind tapping up and down the road in a frenzy and groping and calling for his comrades Finally he took the wrong turn and ran a few steps past me towards the hamlet crying —

Johnny Black Dog Dirk and other names you won't leave old Pew, mates—not old Pew!

Just then the noise of horses topped the rise and four or five riders came in sight in the moonlight and swept at full gallop down the slope

At this Pew saw his error turned with a scream and ran straight for the ditch into which he rolled But he was on his feet again in a second and made another dash now utterly bewildered right under the nearest of the coming horses

The rider tried to save him but in vain Down went Pew with a cry that rang high into the night and the four hoofs trampled and spurned him and passed by He fell on his side then collapsed upon his face and moved no more

I leapt to my feet and hailed the riders They were pulling up at any rate horrified at the accident and I soon saw what they were One tailing out behind the rest was a lad that had gone from the hamlet to Dr Livesey's the rest were revenue officers whom he had met by the way and with whom he had the intelligence to return at once Some news of the lugger in Kitt's Hole had found its way to Supervisor Dance and set him forth that night in our direction and to that circumstance my mother and I owed our preservation from death

Pew was dead stone dead As for my mother when we had carried her up to the hamlet a little cold water and salts and that soon brought her back again, and she was none the worse for her terror though she still continued to deplore the balance of the money In the meantime the supervisor rode on as fast as he could to Kitt's Hole but his men had to dismount and grope down the dingle leading and sometimes supporting their horses and in continual fear of ambushes so it was no great matter for surprise that when they got down to the Hole the lugger was already under way though still close in He hailed her A voice replied telling him to keep out of the moonlight or he would get some lead in him and at the same time a bullet whistled close by his arm Soon after the lugger doubled the point and disappeared Mr Dance stood there as he said like a fish out of water and all he could do was to despatch a man to B—— to warn the cutter And that said he is just about as good as nothing They've got off clean and there's an end Only he added 'I'm glad I trod on Master Pew's corns for by this time he had heard my story

I went back with him to the 'Admiral Benbow' and you cannot imagine a house in such a state of smash the very clock had been thrown down by these fellows in their furious hunt after my mother and myself and though nothing had actually been taken away except the captain's money bag and a little silver from the till I could see at once that we were ruined Mr Dance could make nothing of the scene

They got the money, you say? Well then Hawkins what in fortune were they after? More money I suppose?

'No sir, not money I think' replied I In fact sir I believe I have the thing in my breast pocket, and to tell you the truth I should like to get it put in safety

'To be sure boy, quite right said he I'll take it if you like

'I thought perhaps Dr Livesey—— I began

'Perfectly right he interrupted very cheerily perfectly right—a gentleman and a magistrate And now I come to think of it I might as well ride round there myself and report to him or squire Master Pew's dead when all's done not that I regret it but he's dead you see and people will make it out against an officer of his Majesty's revenue if make it out they can Now I tell you Hawkins if you like I'll take you along

I thanked him heartily for the offer and we walked back to the hamlet where the horses were By the time I had told mother of my purpose they were all in the saddle

Dogger said Mr Dance you have a good horse, take up this lad behind you

As soon as I was mounted holding on to Dogger's belt the supervisor gave the word and the party struck out at a bouncing trot on to the road to Dr Livesey's house

VI

THE CAPTAIN'S PAPERS

WE RODE HARD all the way till we drew up before Dr Livesey's door The house was all dark to the front

Mr Dance told me to jump down and knock and Dogger gave me a stirrup to descend by The door was opened almost at once by the maid

Is Dr Livesey in? I asked

No she said he had come home in the afternoon but had gone up to the Hall to dine and pass the evening with the squire

So there we go boys said Mr Dance

This time as the distance was short I did not mount but ran with Dogger's stirrup leather to the lodge gates and up the long leafless moonlit avenue to where the white line of the Hall buildings looked on either hand on great old gardens Here Mr Dance dismounted and taking me along with him was admitted at a word into the house

The servant led us down a matted passage and showed us at the end into a great library all lined with bookcases and busts upon the top of them where the squire and Dr Livesey sat pipe in hand on either side of a bright fire

I had never seen the squire so near at hand He was a tall man over six feet high and broad in proportion and he had a bluff rough and ready face all roughened and reddened and lined in his long travels His eyebrows were very black and moved readily and this gave him a look of some temper not bad, you would say but quick and high

Come in Mr Dance says he very stately and condescending

Good evening Dance says the doctor with a nod And good evening to you friend Jim What good wind brings you here?

The supervisor stood up straight and stiff and told his story like a lesson, and you should have seen how the two gentlemen leaned forward and looked at each other and forgot to smoke in their surprise and interest When they heard how my mother went back to the inn Dr Livesey fairly slapped his thigh and the squire cried Bravo! and broke his long pipe against the grate Long before it was done Mr Trelawney (that you will remember was the squire's name) had got up from his seat and was striding about the room and the doctor as if to hear the better had taken off his powdered wig and sat there looking very strange indeed with his own close cropped black poll

At last Mr Dance finished the story

Mr Dance said the squire you are a very noble fellow And as for riding down that black atrocious miscreant I regard it as an act of virtue sir like stamping on a cockroach This lad Hawkins is a trump I perceive Hawkins, will you ring that bell? Mr Dance must have some ale

And so Jim said the doctor, you have the thing that they were after, have you?

Here it is sir' said I and gave him the oilskin packet The doctor looked it all over as if his fingers were itching to open it but instead of doing that, he put it quietly in the pocket of his coat

Squire said he when Dance has had his ale he must of course be off on his Majesty's service but I mean to keep Jim Hawkins here to sleep at my house and with your permission I propose we should have up the cold pie, and let him sup

As you will Livesey said the squire, Hawkins has earned better than cold pie

So a big pigeon pie was brought in and put on a side table and I made a hearty supper for I was as hungry as a hawk, while Mr Dance was further complimented and at last dismissed

And now squire said the doctor

And now Livesey said the squire in the same breath

One at a time one at a time laughed Dr Livesey 'You have heard of this Flint I suppose?

Heard of him! cried the squire Heard of him you say! He was the blood thirstiest buccaneer that sailed Blackbeard was a child to Flint The Spaniards were so prodigiously afraid of him that I tell you sir I was sometimes proud he was an Englishman I've seen his top sails with these eyes off Trinidad and the cowardly son of a rum puncheon that I sailed with put back—put back sir into Port of Spain

Well I've heard of him myself in England' said the doctor 'But the point is had he money?

Money! cried the squire Have you heard the story? What were these villains after but money? What do they care for but money? For what would they risk their rascal carcases but money?

'That we shall soon know replied the doctor "But you are so confoundedly

hot headed and exclamatory that I cannot get a word in What I want to know is this Supposing that I have here in my pocket some clue to where Flint buried his treasure will that treasure amount to much?

Amount sir' cried the squire It will amount to this if we have the clue you talk about I fit out a ship in Bristol dock and take you and Hawkins here along and I'll have that treasure if I search a year

Very well said the doctor Now then, if Jim is agreeable, we'll open the packet and he laid it before him on the table

The bundle was sewn together and the doctor had to get out his instrument case and cut the stitches with his medical scissors It contained two things—a book and a sealed paper

First of all we'll try the book observed the doctor

The squire and I were both peering over his shoulder as he opened it for Dr Livesey had kindly motioned me to come round from the side table where I had been eating to enjoy the sport of the search On the first page there were only some scraps of writing such as a man with a pen in his hand might make for idleness or practice One was the same as the tattoo mark Billy Bones his fancy then there was Mr W Bones mate' No more rum Off Palm Key he got it and some other snatches mostly single words and unintel ligible I could not help wondering who it was that had got it and what 'itt' was that he got A knife in his back as like as not

Not much instruction there said Dr Livesey as he passed on

The next ten or twelve pages were filled with a curious series of entries There was a date at one end of the line and at the other a sum of money as in common account books but instead of explanatory writing only a varying number of crosses between the two On the 12th of June 1745 for instance a sum of seventy pounds had plainly become due to someone and there was nothing but six crosses to explain the cause In a few cases to be sure the name of a place would be added as Offe Caraccas or a mere entry of latitude and longitude as $62^{\circ} 17' 20''$ $19^{\circ} 2' 40''$

The record lasted over nearly twenty years the amount of the separate entries growing larger as time went on and at the end a grand total had been made out after five or six wrong additions and these words appended Bones his pile

I can't make head or tail of this said Dr Livesey

The thing is as clear as noonday cried the squire This is the black-hearted hound's account book These crosses stand for the names of ships or towns that they sank or plundered The sums are the scoundrel's share and where he feared an ambiguity you see he added something clearer Offe Caraccas now you see here was some unhappy vessel boarded off that coast God help the poor souls that manned her—coral long ago

Right' said the doctor See what it is to be a traveller Right' And the amounts increase you see as he rose in rank

There was little else in the volume but a few bearings of places ~~marked up~~ blank leaves towards the end and a table for reducing French ~~English~~ and Spanish moneys to a common value

Thrifty man' cried the doctor He wasn't the one to be cheated
 'And now said the squire for the other

The paper had been sealed in several places with a thimble by way of seal
 the very thimble perhaps that I had found in the captain's pocket The doctor
 opened the seals with great care and there fell out the map of an island with
 latitude and longitude soundings names of hills and bays and inlets and
 every particular that would be needed to bring a ship to a safe anchorage upon
 its shores It was about nine miles long and five across shaped you might say
 lake a fat dragon standing up and had two fine landlocked harbours and a hill
 in the centre part marked The Spy glass There were several additions of a
 later date but above all three crosses of red ink—two on the north part of
 the island one in the southwest and beside this last in the same red ink and
 in a small neat hand very different from the captain's tottery characters these
 words — Bulk of treasure here

Over on the back the same hand had written this further information —

Tall tree Spy glass shoulder bearing a point to the N of NNE

Skeleton Island ESE and by E

Ten feet

The bar silver is in the north cache you can find it by the trend of the east
 hummock ten fathoms south of the black crag with the face on it

The arms are easy found in the sand hill N point of north inlet cape bearing
 E and a quarter N

J F'

That was all but brief as it was and, to me incomprehensible it filled the
 squire and Dr Livesey with delight

Livesey said the squire you will give up this wretched practice at once
 To morrow I start for Bristol In three week's time—three weeks!—two weeks
 —ten days—we'll have the best ship sir and the choicest crew in England
 Hawkins shall come as cabin boy You'll make a famous cabin boy Hawkins
 You Livesey are ship's doctor I am admiral We'll take Redruth Joyce, and
 Hunter We'll have favourable winds a quick passage and not the least
 difficulty in finding the spot and money to eat—to roll in—to play duck and
 drake with ever after

Trelawney said the doctor I'll go with you and I'll go bail for it so
 will Jim and be a credit to the undertaking There's only one man I'm afraid
 of

And who's that? cried the squire Name the dog sir!

'You replied the doctor for you cannot hold your tongue We are not
 the only men who know of this paper These fellows who attacked the inn to
 night—bold desperate blades for sure—and the rest who stayed aboard that
 lugger and more I dare say not far off are, one and all through thick and
 thin bound that they'll get that money We must none of us go alone till we
 get to sea Jim and I shall stick together in the meanwhile you'll take Joyce and
 Hunter when you ride to Bristol and from first to last not one of us must
 breathe a word of what we've found

Livesey ' returned the squire you are always in the right of it I'll be silent as the grave

PART II
THE SEA COOK
VII
I Go to BRISTOL

IT WAS LONGER than the squire imagined ere we were ready for the sea and none of our first plans—not even Dr Livesey's of keeping me beside him—could be carried out as we intended. The doctor had to go to London for a physician to take charge of his practice the squire was hard at work at Bristol and I lived on at the Hall under the charge of old Redruth the gamekeeper, almost a prisoner but full of sea dreams and the most charming anticipations of strange islands and adventures I brooded by the hour together over the map, all the details of which I well remembered. Sitting by the fire in the housekeeper's room I approached that island in my fancy from every possible direction I explored every acre of its surface I climbed a thousand times to that tall hill they call the Spy glass and from the top enjoyed the most wonderful and changing prospects. Sometimes the isle was thick with savages with whom we fought sometimes full of dangerous animals that hunted us but in all my fancies nothing occurred to me so strange and tragic as our actual adventures.

So the weeks passed on till one fine day there came a letter addressed to Dr Livesey with this addition To be opened in the case of his absence by Redruth or young Hawkins Obeying this order we found or rather I found—for the gamekeeper was a poor hand at reading anything but print—the following important news —

Old Anchor Inn Bristol March 1 17—

DEAR LIVESEY—As I do not know whether you are at the Hall or still in London I send this in double to both places

The ship is bought and fitted She lies at anchor ready for sea You never imagined a sweeter schooner—a child might sail her—two hundred tons name *Hispaniola*

I got her through my old friend Blandy who has proved himself throughout the most surprising trump The admirable fellow literally slaved in my interest and so I may say did everyone in Bristol as soon as they got wind of what port we sailed for—treasure I mean

'Redruth said I interrupting the letter, "Doctor Livesey will not like that The squire has been talking after all

Well, who's a better right" growled the gamekeeper A pretty rum go if squire ain't to talk for Doctor Livesey I should think

At that I gave up all attempt at commentary and read straight on —

Blandly himself found the *Hispaniola* and by the most admirable management got her for the merest trifle. There is a class of men in Bristol monstrously prejudiced against Blandly. They go the length of declaring that this honest creature would do anything for money that the *Hispaniola* belonged to him and that he sold it me absurdly high—the most transparent calumnies. None of them dare however to deny the merits of the ship.

So far there was not a hitch. The world people to be sure—riggers and what not—were most annoyingly slow, but time cured that. It was the crew that troubled me.

I wished a round score of men—in case of natives buccaneers or the odious French—and I had the worry of the deuce itself to find so much as half a dozen till the most remarkable stroke of fortune brought me the very man that I required.

I was standing on the dock when by the merest accident I fell in talk with him. I found he was an old sailor kept a public house knew all the seafaring men in Bristol had lost his health ashore and wanted a good berth as cook to get to sea again. He had hobbled down there that morning he said to get a smell of the salt.

I was monstrously touched—so would you have been—and out of pure pity I engaged him on the spot to be ship's cook. Long John Silver he is called and has lost a leg but that I regarded as a recommendation since he lost it in his country's service under the immortal Hawke. He has no pension Livesey. Imagine the abominable age we live in!

Well sir I thought I had only found a cook but — was a crew I had discovered. Between Silver and myself we got together in a few days a company of the toughest old salts imaginable—not pretty to look at but fellows by their faces of the most indomitable spirit I declare we could fight a frigate.

Long John even got rid of two out of the six or seven I had already engaged. He showed me in a moment that they were just the sort of freshwater swabs we had to fear in an adventure of importance.

I am in the most magnificent health and spirits eating like a bull sleeping like a tree yet I shall not enjoy a moment till I hear my old tarpaulins tramping round the capstan. Seaward ho! Hang the treasure! It's the glory of the sea that has turned my head. So now Livesey come post do not lose an hour if you respect me.

Let young Hawkins go at once to see his mother with Redruth for a guard and then both come full speed to Bristol.

JOHN TREFLAWNEY

Postscript—I did not tell you that Blandly who by the way is to send a consort after us if we don't turn up by the end of August had found an admirable fellow for sailing master—a stiff man which I regret but in all other respects a treasure. Long John Silver unearthed a very competent man for a mate a man named Arrow I have a boatswain who pipes Livesey so things shall go man o' war fashion on board the good ship *Hispaniola*.

I forgot to tell you that Silver is a man of substance I know of my own knowledge that he has a banker's account which has never been overdrawn. He leaves his wife to manage the inn and as she is a woman of colour a pair of old bachelors like you and I may be excused for guessing that it is the wife quite as much as the health that sends him back to roving.

J T

'P S—Hawkins may stay one night with his mother

You can fancy the excitement into which that letter put me I was half beside myself with glee and if ever I despised a man, it was old Tom Redruth.

who could do nothing but grumble and lament Any of the under gamekeepers would gladly have changed places w th him but such was not the squire's pleasure and the squire's pleasure was like law among them all Nobody but old Redruth would have dared so much as even to grumble

The next morning he and I set out on foot for the Admiral Benbow and there I found my mother in good health and spirits The captain who had so long been a cause of so much discomfort was gone where the wicked cease from troubling The squire had had everything repaired, and the public rooms and the sign repainted and had added some furniture—above all a beautiful armchair for mother in the bar He had found her a boy as an apprentice also so that she should not want help while I was gone

It was on seeing that boy that I understood for the first time my situation I had thought up to that moment of the adventures before me not at all of the time I was leaving and now at the sight of this clumsy stranger who was to stay here in my place beside my mother I had my first attack of tears I am afraid I led that boy a dog's life for as he was new to the work I had a hundred opportunities of setting him right and putting him down and I was not slow to profit by them

The night passed and the next day after dinner Redruth and I were afoot again and on the road I said good bye to mother and the cove where I had lived since I was born and the dear old Admiral Benbow —since he was repainted no longer quite so dear One of my last thoughts was of the captain who had so often strode along the beach with his cocked hat his sabre cut cheek and his old brass telescope Next moment we had turned the corner and my home was out of sight

The mail picked us up about dusk at the Royal George on the heath I was wedged in between Redruth and a stout old gentleman and in spite of the swift motion and the cold night air I must have dozed a great deal from the very first and then slept like a log up hill and down dale through stage after stage for when I was awakened at last it was by a punch in the ribs and I opened my eyes to find that we were standing still before a large building in a city street and that the day had already broken a long time

Where are we? I asked

Bristol said Tom Get down

Mr Trelawney had taken up his residence at an inn far down the docks, to superintend the work upon the schooner Thither we had now to walk and our way to my great delight lay along the quays and beside the great multitude of ships of all sizes and rigs and nations In one sailors were singing at their work in another there were men aloft high over my head hanging to threads that seemed no thicker than a spider's Though I had lived by the shore all my life I seemed never to have been near the sea till then The smell of tar and salt was something new I saw the most wonderful figureheads that had all been far over the ocean I saw besides many old sailors with rings in their ears and whiskers curled in ringlets and tarry pigtails and their swaggering clumsy seawalk and if I had seen as many kings or archbishops I could not have been more delighted

And I was going to sea myself to sea in a schooner with a piping boatswain, and pig tailed singing seamen to sea bound for an unknown island and to seek for buried treasures!

While I was still in this delightful dream we came suddenly in front of a large inn and met Squire Trelawney all dressed out like a sea officer in stout blue cloth coming out of the door with a smile on his face and a capital imitation of a sailor's walk

Here you are he cried and the doctor came last night from London
Bravo! the ship's company complete!

Oh sir cried I when do we sail?
'Sail' says he We sail to morrow!

VIII

AT THE SIGN OF THE SPY GLASS"

WHEN I had done breal fasting the squire give me a note addressed to John Silver at the sign of the Spy glass and told me I should easily find the place by following the line of docks and keeping a bright look out for a little tavern with a large brass telescope for sign I set off overjoyed at this opportunity to see some more of the ships and seamen and picled my way among a great crowd of people and carts and bales for the dock was now at its busiest until I found the tavern in question

It was a bright enough little place of entertainment The sign was newly painted the windows had bright red curtains the floor was cleanly sanded There was a street on either side and an open door on both which made the large low room pretty clear to see in in spite of clouds of tobacco smoke

The customers were mostly seafaring men, and they talked so loudly that I hung at the door almost afraid to enter

As I was waiting a man came out of a side room and at a glance I was sure he must be Long John His left leg was cut off close by the hip and under the left shoulder he carried a crutch which he managed with wonderful dexterity hopping about upon it like a bird He was very tall and strong with a face as big as a ham—plum and pale, but intelligent and smiling Indeed, he seemed in the most cheerful spirits whistling as he moved about among the tables with a merry word or a slap on the shoulder for the most favoured of his guests

Now to tell you the truth from the very first mention of Long John in Squire Trelawney's letter I had taken a fear in my mind that he might prove to be the very one-legged sailor whom I had watched for so long at the old Benbow But one look at the man before me was enough I had seen the captain and Black Dog and the blind man Pew and I thought I knew what a buccaneer was like—a very different creature according to me, from this clean and pleasant tempered landlord

I plucked up courage at once, crossed the threshold, and walked right up to the man where he stood, propped on his crutch, talking to a customer

Mr Silver sir? I asked holding out the note
 'Yes my lad said he such is my name to be sure And who may you be?'
 And then as he saw the squire's letter, he seemed to me to give something almost like a start

'Oh' said he quite loud and offering his hand, I see You are our new cabin boy pleased I am to see you

And he took my hand in his large firm grasp

Just then one of the customers at the far side rose suddenly and made for the door It was close by him and he was out in the street in a moment But his hurry had attracted my notice and I recognised him at a glance It was the tallow-faced man wanting two fingers who had come first to the Admiral Benbow

Oh I cried stop him! it's Black Dog!"

'I don't care two coppers who he is' cried Silver 'But he hasn't paid his score Harry run and catch him

One of the others who was nearest the door leaped up and started in pursuit

If he were Admiral Hawke he shall pay his score' cried Silver, and then, relinquishing my hand— Who did you say he was? he asked 'Black what?'

Dog sir said I Has Mr Trelawney not told you of the buccaneers? He was one of them

So' cried Silver In my house! Ben run and help Harry One of those swabs was he? Was that you drinking with him Morgan? Step up here

The man whom he called Morgan—an old grey-haired mahogany faced sailor—came forward pretty sheepishly rolling his quid

'Now Morgan said Long John very sternly you never clapped your eyes on that Black—Black Dog before, did you, now?

Not I sir said Morgan with a salute

'You didn't know his name, did you?

"No, sir

By the powers Tom Morgan it's as good for you!" exclaimed the landlord If you had been mixed up with the like of that you would never have put another foot in my house, you may lay to that And what was he saying to you?

'I don't rightly know sir' answered Morgan

'Do you call that a head on your shoulders or a blessed dead eye?' cried Long John Don't rightly know don't you! Perhaps you don't happen to rightly know who you was speaking to perhaps? Come now, what was he jawing—v yages caps ships? Pipe up? What was it?

We was a talkin' of keel hauling answered Morgan

'Keel hauling was you? and a mighty suitable thing too and you may lay to that Get back to your place for a lubber Tom

And then as Morgan rolled back to his seat Silver added to me in a confidential whisper that was very flattering as I thought —

He's quite an honest man Tom Morgan on'y stupid And now,' he ran on again aloud let's see—Black Dog? No I don't know the name, not I Yet

I kind of think I've—yes I've seen the swab He used to come here with a blind beggar he used

That he did you may be sure,' said I "I knew that blind man too His name was Pew

It was' cried Silver now quite excited Pew! That were his name for certain Ah, he looked a shark he did! If we run down this Black Dog now there'll be news for Cap'n Trelawney! Ben's a good runner few seamen run better than Ben He should run him down hand over hand by the powers! He talked o' keel hauling did he? *I'll* keel haul him'

All the time he was jerking out these phrases he was stumping up and down the tavern on his crutch slapping tables with his hand and giving such a show of excitement as would have convinced an Old Bailey judge or a Bow Street runner My suspicions had been thoroughly re awakened on finding Black Dog at the Spy glass and I watched the cook narrowly But he was too deep and too ready and too clever for me and by the time the two men had come back out of breath, and confessed that they had lost the track in a crowd and been scolded like thieves, I would have gone bail for the innocence of Long John Silver

See here now Hawkins" said he, 'here's a blessed hard thing on a man like me now aint it? There's Cap'n Trelawney—what's he to think? Here I have this confounded son of a Dutchman sitting in my own house drinking of my own rum! Here you comes and tells me of it plain and here I let him give us all the slip before by blessed deadlights! Now Hawkins you do me justice with the cap'n You're a lad you are but you're as smart as paint I see that when you first came in Now here it is What could I do with this old timber I hobble on? When I was an A B master mariner I'd have come up alongside of him hand over hand and broached him to in a brace of old shakes I would, but now—'

And then all of a sudden, he stopped and his jaw dropped as though he had remembered something

The score! he burst out Three goes o' rum! Why shiver my timbers, if I hadn't forgotten my score!

And falling on a bench he laughed until the tears ran down his cheeks I could not help joining and we laughed together, peal after peal until the tavern rang again

Why what a precious old sea calf I am! ' he said at last wiping his cheeks 'You and me should get on well Hawkins for *I'll* take my davy I should be rated ship's boy But come now stand by to go about This won't do Dooty is dooty messmates *I'll* put on my old cocked hat and step along of you to Cap'n Trelawney and report this here affair For, mind you it's serious young Hawkins and neither you nor me's come out of it with what I should make so bold as to call credit Nor you neither says you not smart—none of the pair of us smart But dash my buttons! that was a good un about my score

And he began to laugh again and that so heartily that, though I did not see the joke as he did I was again obliged to join him in his mirth

On our little walk along the quays he made himself the most interesting

companion telling me about the different ships that we passed by their rig tonnage and nationality explaining the work that was going forward—how one was discharging another taking in cargo and a third making ready for sea and every now and then telling me some little anecdote of ships or seamen or repeating a nautical phrase till I had learned it perfectly I began to see that here was one of the best of possible shipmates

When we got to the inn the squire and Dr Livesey were seated together, finishing a quart of ale with a toast in it before they should go aboard the schooner on a visit of inspection

Long John told the story from first to last with a great deal of spirit and the most perfect truth That was how it were now weren't it Hawkins? he would say now and again and I could always bear him entirely out

The two gentlemen regretted that Black Dog had got away but we all agreed there was nothing to be done and after he had been complimented, Long John took up his crutch and departed

All hands aboard by four this afternoon shouted the squire after him

Ay ay sir cried the cook in the passage

Well, squire said Dr Livesey, I don't put much faith in your discoveries, as a general thing but I will say this John Silver suits me

The man's a perfect trump declared the squire

And now added the doctor Jim may come on board with us, may he not?

To be sure he may, says squire Take your hat, Hawkins and we'll see the ship

IX

POWDER AND ARMS

THE HISPANIOLA lay some way out and we went under the figureheads and round the sterns of many other ships and their cables sometimes grated underneath our keel and sometimes swung above us At last however we got alongside and were met and saluted as we stepped aboard by the mate Mr Arrow a brown old sailor with earrings in his ears and a squint He and the squire were very thick and friendly but I soon observed that things were not the same between Mr Trelawny and the captain

This last was a sharp looking man who seemed angry with everything on board and was soon to tell us why for we had hardly got down into the cabin when a sailor followed us

Captain Smollett sir axing to speak with you, said he

I am always at the captain's order Show him in said the squire

The captain who was close behind his messenger entered at once and shut the door behind him

Well Captain Smollett what have you to say? All well I hope, all ship shape and seaworthy

Well sir said the captain better speak plain I believe even at the risk

of offence I don't like this cruise I don't like the men and I don't like my officer That's short and sweet

Perhaps sir you don't like the ship? inquired the squire very angry, as I could see

I can't speak as to that, sir not having seen her tried said the captain She seems a clever craft more I can't say

Possibly sir you may not like your employer either? says the squire But here Dr Livesey cut in

Stay a bit said he stay a bit No use of such questions as that but to produce ill feeling The captain has said too much or he has said too little and I'm bound to say that I require an explanation of his words You don't you say like this cruise Now, why?

I was engaged sir on what we call sealed orders to sail this ship for that gentleman where he should bid me said the captain So far so good But now I find that every man before the mast knows more than I do I don't call that fair now do you?

No said Dr Livesey I don't

Next said the captain I learn we are going after treasure—hear it from my own hands mind you Now treasure is ticklish work I don't like treasure voyages on any account and I don't like them above all when they are secret, and when (begging your pardon Mr Trelawney) the secret has been told to the parrot

Silver's parrot? asked the squire

It's a way of speaking said the captain Blabbed I mean It's my belief neither of you gentlemen know what you are about but I'll tell you my way of it—life or death and a close run

That is all clear and I daresay true enough replied Dr Livesey We take the risk but we are not so ignorant as you believe us Next you say you don't like the crew Are they not good seamen?

I don't like them sir returned Captain Smollett And I think I should have had the choosing of my own hands if you go to that

Perhaps you should replied the doctor My friend should, perhaps have taken you along with him but the slight, if there be one was unintentional And you don't like Mr Arrow?

I don't sir I believe he's a good seaman but he's too free with the crew to be a good officer A mate should keep himself to himself—shouldn't drink with the men before the mast!

Do you mean he drinks cried the squire

'No sir replied the captain only that he's too familiar'

'Well now, and the short and long of it, captain?' asked the doctor "Tell us what you want

Well gentlemen are you determined to go on this cruise?

Like iron answered the squire

'Very good said the captain "Then as you've heard me very patiently, saying things that I could not prove hear me a few words more They are putting the powder and the arms in the fore hold Now you have a good place

under the cabin why not put them there?—first point Then you are bringing four of your own people with you and they tell me some of them are to be berthed forward Why not give them the berths here beside the cabin?—second point

Any more?" asked Mr Trelawney

One more said the captain There's been too much blabbing already

Far too much agreed the doctor

'I'll tell you what I've heard myself' continued Captain Smollett that you have a map of an island that there's crosses on the map to show where treasure is and that the island lies— And then he named the latitude and longitude exactly

'I never told that,' cried the squire to a soul'

'The hands know it sir returned the captain

"Livesey that must have been you or Hawkins" cried the squire

'It doesn't much matter who it was' replied the doctor And I could see that neither he nor the captain paid much regard to Mr Trelawney's protestations Neither did I to be sure he was so loose a talker yet in this case I believe he was really right and that nobody had told the situation of the island

'Well gentlemen continued the captain, I don't know who has this map, but I make it a point it shall be kept secret even from me and Mr Arrow Otherwise I would ask you to let me resign'

I see said the doctor You wish us to keep this matter dark and to make a garrison of the stern part of the ship manned with my friend's own people, and provided with all the arms and powder on board In other words, you fear a mutiny

'Sir' said Captain Smollett with no intention to take offence I deny your right to put words into my mouth No captain sir would be justified in going to sea at all if he had ground enough to say that As for Mr Arrow I believe him thoroughly honest some of the men are the same all may be for what I know But I am responsible for the ship's safety and the life of every man Jack aboard of her I see things going as I think not quite right And I ask you to take certain precautions or let me resign my berth And that's all

"Captain Smollett began the doctor with a smile did ever you hear the fable of the mountain and the mouse? You'll excuse me I daresay but you remind me of that fable When you came in here I'll stake my wig you meant more than this

'Doctor said the captain you are smart When I came in here I meant to get discharged I had no thought that Mr Trelawney would hear a word

'No more I would cried the squire Had Livesey not been here I should have seen you to the deuce As it is I have heard you I will do as you desire, but I think the worse of you

'That's as you please sir said the captain "You'll find I do my duty"

And with that he took his leave

Trelawney, said the doctor contrary to all my notions I believe you have managed to get two honest men on board with you—that man and John Silver

Silver if you like cried the squire but as for that intolerable humbug, I declare I think his conduct unmanly unsutorly and downright un English'

Well says the doctor we shall see

When we came on deck the men had begun already to take out the arms and powder yo ho ing at their worl while the captain and Mr Arrow stood by superintending

The new arrangement was quite to my lik ing The whole schooner had been overhauled six berths had been made astern out of what had been the afterpart of the main hold, and this set of cabins was only joined to the galley and forecastle by a sparred passage on the port side It had been originally meant that the captain Mr Arrow Hunter Joyce the doctor and the squire were to occupy these six berths Now Redruth and I were to get two of them and Mr Arrow and the captain were to sleep on deck in the companion which had been enlarged on each side till you might almost have called it a round house Very low it was still of course but there was room to swing two ham mocks and even the mate seemed pleased with the arrangement Even he perhaps had been doubtful as to the crew but that is only guess for as you shall hear we had not long the benefit of his opinion

We were all hard at work changing the powder and the berths when the last man or two and Long John along with them came off in a shore boat

The cook came up the side like a monkey for cleverness and as soon as he saw what was doing So ho mates' says he what's this?

We're a changing of the powder Jack answers one

'Why by the powers cried Long John 'if we do well miss the morning tide'

'My orders!' said the captain shortly You may go below my man Hands will want supper '

'Ay ay sir' answered the cook and, touching his forelock, he disappeared at once in the direction of his galley

That's a good man captain said the doctor

Very likely sir replied Captain Smollett I ay with that men-easy" he ran on to the fellows who were shifting the powder and then suddenly observing me examining the swivel we carried amidships a long brass nine- 'Here, you ship's boy he cried 'out o that! Off with you to the cook and get some work

And then as I was hurry ing off I heard him say quite loudly to the doctor -

I'll have no favourites on my ship

I assure you I was quite of the squire's way of thinking and hated the captain deeply

THE VOYAGE

ALL THAT NIGHT we were in a great bustle getting things stowed in their place, and boatfuls of the squire's friends Mr Blundly and the like coming off to wish

him a good voyage and a safe return We never had a night at the Admiral Benbow when I had half the work and I was dog-tired when, a little before dawn the boatswain sounded his pipe and the crew began to man the capstan-bars I might have been twice as weary yet I would not have left the deck all was so new and interesting to me—the brief commands the shrill note of the whistle the men bustling to their places in the glimmer of the ship's lanterns.

'Now Barbecue, tip us a stave' cried one voice

The old one cried another

Ay ay mates said Long John who was standing by, with his crutch under his arm and at once broke out in the air and words I knew so well—

'Fifteen men on The Dead Man's Chest'—

And then the whole crew bore chorus —

"Yo ho ho, and a bottle of rum!"

And at the third ho! drove the bars before them with a will

Even at that exciting moment it carried me back to the old Admiral Benbow in a second and I seemed to hear the voice of the captain piping in the chorus But soon the anchor was shortup soon it was hanging dripping at the bows soon the sails began to draw and the land and shipping to fit by on either side, and before I could lie down to snatch an hour of slumber the *Hispaniola* had begun her voyage to the Isle of Treasure

I am not going to relate that voyage in detail It was fairly prosperous The ship proved to be a good ship the crew were capable seamen and the captain thoroughly understood his business But before we came the length of Treasure Island two or three things had happened which require to be known

Mr Arrow first of all turned out even worse than the captain had feared He had no command among the men and people did what they pleased with him But that was by no means the worst of it for after a day or two at sea he began to appear on deck with hazy eye red cheeks stuttering tongue and other marks of drunkenness Time after time he was ordered below in disgrace. Sometimes he fell and cut himself sometimes he lay all day long in his little bunk at one side of the companion sometimes for a day or two he would be almost sober and attend to his work at least passably

In the meantime we could never make out where he got the drink That was the ship's mystery Watch him as we pleased we could do nothing to solve it and when we asked him to his face he would only laugh if he were drunk and if he were sober deny solemnly that he ever tasted anything but water

He was not only useless as an officer and a bad influence amongst the men, but it was plain that at this rate he must soon kill himself outright so nobody was much surprised nor very sorry when one dark night with a head sea he disappeared entirely and was seen no more

Overboard! said the captain Well gentlemen that saves the trouble of putting him in irons

But there we were without a mate and it was necessary of course to advance one of the men The boatswain Job Anderson was the likeliest man

aboard, and, though he kept his old title, he served in a way as mate. Mr. Trelawney had followed the sea, and his knowledge made him very useful, for he often took a watch himself in easy weather. And the coxswain, Israel Hands, was a careful, wily, old, experienced seaman, who could be trusted at a pinch with almost anything.

He was a great confidant of Long John Silver, and so the mention of his name leads me to speak of our ship's cook, Barbecue as the men called him.

Aboard ship he carried his crutch by a lanyard round his neck, to have both hands as free as possible. It was something to see him wedge the foot of the crutch against a bulkhead, and, propped against it, yielding to every movement of the ship, get on with his cooking like someone safe ashore. Still more strange was it to see him in the heaviest of weather cross the deck. He had a line or two rigged up to help him across the widest spaces—Long John's earrings, they were called; and he would hand himself from one place to another, now using the crutch, now trailing it alongside by the lanyard, as quickly as another man could walk. Yet some of the men who had sailed with him before expressed their pity to see him so reduced.

"He's no common man, Barbecue," said the coxswain to me. "He had good schooling in his young days, and can speak like a book when so minded; and brave—a lion's nothing alongside of Long John! I seen him grapple four, and knock their heads together—him unarmed."

All the crew respected and even obeyed him. He had a way of talking to each, and doing everybody some particular service. To me he was unweariedly kind; and always glad to see me in the galley, which he kept as clean as a new pin; the dishes hanging up burnished, and his parrot in a cage in one corner.

"Come away, Hawkins," he would say; "come and have a yarn with John. Nobody more welcome than yourself, my son. Sit you down and hear the news. Here's Cap'n Flint—I calls my parrot Cap'n Flint, after the famous buccaneer—here's Cap'n Flint predicting success to our v'yage. Wasn't you, cap'n?"

And the parrot would say, with great rapidity, "Pieces of eight! pieces of eight! pieces of eight!" till you wondered that it was not out of breath, or till John threw his handkerchief over the cage.

"Now, that bird," he would say, "is, may be, two hundred years old, Hawkins—they lives for ever mostly; and if anybody's seen more wickedness, it must be the devil himself. She's sailed with England, the great Cap'n England, the pirate. She's been at Madagascar, and at Malabar, and Surinam, and Providence, and Portobello. She was at the fishing up of the wrecked plate ships. It's there she learned 'Pieces of eight,' and little wonder; three hundred and fifty thousand of 'em, Hawkins! She was at the boarding of the Viceroy of the Indies out of Goa, she was; and to look at her you would think she was a babbly. But you smelt powder—didn't you, cap'n?"

"Stand by to go about," the parrot would scream.

"Ah, she's a handsome craft, she is," the cook would say, and give her sugar from his pocket, and then the bird would peck at the bars and swear straight on, passing belief for wickedness. "There," John would add, "you can't touch pitch and not be mucked, lad. Here's this poor old innocent bird o' mine swear-

ing blue fire and none the wiser you may lay to that She would swear the same in a manner of speaking before chaplain And John would touch his forelock with a solemn way he had, that made me think he was the best of men

In the meantime squire and Captain Smollett were still on pretty distant terms with one another The squire made no bones about the matter he despised the captain The captain on his part never spoke but when he was spoken to and then sharp and short and dry and not a word wasted He owned when driven into a corner that he seemed to have been wrong about the crew that some of them were as brisk as he wanted to see, and all had behaved fairly well As for the ship he had taken a downright fancy to her She ll lie a point nearer the wind than a man has a right to expect of his own married wife sir But, he would add, all I say is we re not home again, and I don t like the cruise

The squire at this would turn away and march up and down the deck, chin in air

A trifle more of that man he would say ‘and I should explode’

We had some heavy weather which only proved the qualities of the *Hispaniola* Every man on board seemed well content and they must have been hard to please if they had been otherwise for it is my belief there was never a ship s company so spoiled since Noah put to sea Double grog was going on the least excuse there was duff on odd days as for instance if the squire heard it was any man s birthday and always a barrel of apples standing broached in the waist for anyone to help himself that had a fancy

‘Never knew good come of it yet the captain said to Dr Livesey Spoil fosc le hands make devils That s my belief

But good did come of the apple barrel as you shall hear, for if it had not been for that we should have had no note of warning, and might all have perished by the hand of treachery

This was how it came about

We had run up the trades to get the wind of the island we were after—I am not allowed to be more plain—and now we were running down for it with a bright lookout day and night It was about the last day of our outward voyage, by the largest computation some time that night or at latest, before noon of the morrow we should sight the Treasure Island We were heading SSW and had a steady breeze abeam and a quiet sea The *Hispaniola* rolled steadily dipping her bowsprit now and then with a whiff of spray All was drawing alow and aloft everyone was in the bravest spirits because we were now so near an end of the first part of our adventure

Now just after sundown when all my work was over and I was on my way to my berth, it occurred to me that I should like an apple I ran on deck The watch was all forward looking out for the island The man at the helm was watching the luff of the sail and whistling away gently to himself and that was the only sound excepting the swish of the sea against the bows and around the sides of the ship

In I got bodily into the apple barrel, and found there was scarce an apple

left; but, sitting down there in the dark, what with the sound of the waters and the rocking movement of the ship, I had either fallen asleep, or was on the point of doing so, when a heavy man sat down with rather a clash close by. The barrel shook as he leaned his shoulders against it, and I was just about to jump up when the man began to speak. It was Silver's voice, and, before I had heard a dozen words, I would not have shown myself for all the world, but lay there, trembling and listening, in the extreme of fear and curiosity; for from these dozen words I understood that the lives of all honest men aboard depended upon me alone.

XI

WHAT I HEARD IN THE APPLE BARREL

"No, nor I," said Silver. "Flint was cap'n; I was quartermaster, along of my timber leg. The same broadside I lost my leg, old Pew lost his deadlights. It was a master surgeon, him that amputated me—out of college and all Latin by the bucket, and what not; but he was hanged like a dog, and sun-dried like the rest, at Corso Castle. That was Robert's men, that was, and comed of changing names to their ships—*Royal Fortune* and so on. Now, what a ship was christened, so let her stay, I says. So it was with the *Cassandra*, as brought us all safe home from Malabar, after England took the Viceroy of the Indies; so it was with the old *Walrus*, Flint's old ship, as I've seen a-muck with the red blood and fit to sink with gold."

"Ah!" cried another voice, that of the youngest hand on board, and evidently full of admiration, "he was the flower of the flock, was Flint!"

"Davis was a man, too, by all accounts," said Silver. "I never sailed along of him; first with England, then with Flint, that's my story; and now here on my own account, in a manner of speaking. I laid by nine hundred safe, from England, and two thousand after Flint. That ain't bad for a man before the mast—all safe in bank. 'Tain't earning now, it's saving does it, you may lay to that. Where's all England's men now? I dunno. Where's Flint's? Why, most on 'em aboard here, and glad to get the duff—been begging before that. some on 'em. Old Pew, as had lost his sight, and might have thought shame, spends twelve hundred pound in a year, like a lord in Parliament. Where is he now? Well, he's dead now and under hatches; but for two year before that, shiver my timbers! the man was starving. He begged, and he stole, and he cut throats, and starved at that, by the powers!"

"Well, it ain't much use, after all," said the young seaman.

"'Tain't much use for fools, you may lay to it—that, nor nothing," cried Silver. "But now, you look here: you're young, you are, but you're as smart as paint. I see that when I set my eyes on you, and I'll talk to you like a man."

You may imagine how I felt when I heard this abominable old rogue addressing another in the very same words of flattery as he had used to myself. I think, if I had been able, that I would have killed him through the barrel. Meantime, he ran on, little supposing he was overheard.

'Here it is about gentlemen of fortune They lives rough and they risk swinging but they eat and drink like fighting cocks and when a cruise is done, why it's hundreds of pounds instead of hundreds of farthings in their pockets Now the most goes for rum and a good fling and to sea again in their shirts But that's not the course I lay I puts it all away some here some there and none too much anywhere by reason of suspicion I'm fifty mark you once back from this cruise I set up gentleman in earnest Time enough too says you Ah but I've lived easy in the meantime never denied myself o' nothing heart desires and sleep soft and ate dainty all my days but when at sea And how did I begin? Before the mast like you'

'Well said the other but all the other money's gone now am't it? You daren't show face in Bristol after this

Why where might you suppose it was? asked Silver derisively

'At Bristol in banks and places answered his companion

It were said the cook it were when we weighed anchor But my old missis has it all by now And the Spy glass is sold lease and goodwill and rigging and the old girls off to meet me I would tell you where for I trust you but it ud make jealousy among the mates

And can you trust your missis? asked the other

'Gentlemen of fortune returned the cook usually trusts little among themselves and right they are you may lay to it But I have a way with me I have When a mate brings a slip on his cable—one as knows me, I mean—it won't be in the same world with old John There was some that was feared of Pew, and some that was feared of Flint, but Flint his own self was feared of me Feared he was and proud They was the roughest crew afloat was Flint's the devil himself would have been feared to go to sea with them Well now I tell you, I'm not a boasting man and you seen yourself how easy I keep company, but when I was quartermaster *lambs* wasn't the word for Flint's old buccaneers Ah you may be sure of yourself in old John's ship'

Well I tell you now replied the lad I didn't half a quarter like the job till I had this talk with you John, but there's my hand on it now

'And a brace lad you were and smart too answered Silver shaking hands so heartily that all the barrel shook and a finer figure head for a gentleman of fortune I never clapped my eyes on

By this time I had begun to understand the meaning of their terms By a gentleman of fortune they plainly meant neither more nor less than a common pirate and the little scene that I had overheard was the last act in the corruption of one of the honest hands—perhaps of the last one left aboard But on this point I was soon to be relieved for Silver giving a little whistle, a third man strolled up and sat down by the party

Dick's square' said Silver

"Oh I know d Dick was square returned the voice of the coxswain Israel Hands He's no fool is Dick' And he turned his quid and spat But look here he went on here's what I want to know Barbecue how long are we a-going to stand off and on like a blessed bumboat? I've had a most enough o'

Cap'n Smollett he's hazed me long enough by thunder! I want to go into that cabin I do I want their pickles and wines and that

'Israel sud Silver your head ain't much account nor ever was But you're able to hear I reckon leisways your ears is big enough Now here's what I say you'll berth forward and you'll live hard and you'll sleep soft and you'll keep sober till I give the word and you mix in to that my son

Well I don't say no do I? growled the coxswain What I say is when? That's what I say

When! by the powers! cried Silver Well now if you want to know I'll tell you when Here's a first rate seaman Cap'n Smollett suits the blessed ship for us Here's this squire and doctor with a map and such—I don't know where it is do I? No more do you say you Well then I mean this squire and doctor shall find the stuff and help us to get it aboard by the powers Then we'll see If I were sure of you all sons of double Dutchmen I'd have Captain Smollett navigate us half way back again before I struck

Why, we're all seamen aboard here I should think said the lad Dick

We're all fœs le hands you mean snipped Silver We can steer a course but who's to set one? That's what all you gentlemen split on first and last If I had my way I'd have Cap'n Smollett work us back into the trades at least, then we'd have no blessed miscalculations and a spoonful of water a day But I know the sort you are I'll finish with 'em at the island as soon's the blunts on board and a pity it is But you're never happy till you're drunk Split my sides I've a sick heart to sail with the likes of you!

Easy all Long John cried Israel Who's a crossin' of you?

Why how many tall ships thinl' ye now have I seen laid aboard? and how many brisk lads drying in the sun at Execution Dock cried Silver and all for this same hurry and hurry and hurry You hear me? I seen a thing or two at sea I have If you would only lay your course and a point to windward, you would ride in carriages you would But not you! I know you You'll have your mouthful of rum tomorrow and go hang

Everybody know'd you was a kind of a chipping John but there's others as could hand and steer as well as you said Israel They liked a bit o' fun, they did They wasn't so high and dry, nohow, but took their fling like jolly companions every one

'So?' says Silver 'Well, and where are they now? Pew wis that sort and he died a beggar-man I lint was and he died of rum at Savannah Ah they was a sweet crew they was! on'y where are they?

But asked Dick when we do lay 'em athwart what are we to do with 'em any how?

There's the man for me! cried the cook admiringly That's what I call business Well what would you thinl' Put 'em ashore like maroons? That would have been England's way Or cut 'em down like that much pork? That would have been Flint's or Billy Bones's

Billy was the man for that,' said Israel 'Dead men don't bite' says he Well, he's dead now hisself he knows the long and short on it now, and if ever a rough hand come to port it was Billy"

Right you are said Silver rough and ready But mark you here I'm an easy man—I'm quite the gentleman says you but this time it's serious Dooty is dooty mates I give my vote—death When I'm in Parlyment and riding in my coach I don't want none of these sea lawyers in the cabin a-coming home unlooked for like the devil at prayers Wait is what I say, but when the times comes why let her rip'

John cries the coxswain you're a man'

You'll say so Israel when you see said Silver 'Only one thing I claim—I claim Trelawney I'll wring his calf's head off his body with these hands Dick!' he added breaking off you just jump up, like a sweet lad, and get me an apple, to wet my pipe like

You may fancy the terror I was in! I should have leaped out and run for it, if I had found the strength, but my limbs and heart alike misgave me I heard Dick begin to rise and then someone seemingly stopped him and the voice of Hands exclaimed —

Oh stow that! Don't you get sucking of that bilge John Let's have a go of the rum ,

Dick said Silver I trust you I've a gauge on the keg mind There's the key you fill a pannikin and bring it up

Terrified as I was I could not help thinking to myself that this must have been how Mr Arrow got the strong waters that destroyed him

Dick was gone but a little while and during his absence Israel spoke straight on in the cook's ear It was but a word or two that I could catch, and yet I gathered some important news for besides other scraps that tended to the same purpose this whole clause was audible Not another man of them'll jine Hence there were still faithful men on board

When Dick returned one after another of the trio took the pannikin and drank—one To luck another with a Here's to old Flint' and Silver himself saying in a kind of song Here's to ourselves and hold your luff plenty of prizes and plenty of duff

Just then a sort of brightness fell upon me in the barrel and looking up I found the moon had risen and was silvering the mizzen-top and shining white on the luff of the fore sail and almost at the same time the voice of the look-out shouted Land ho!"

XII

COUNCIL OF WAR

THERE was a great rush of feet across the deck I could hear people tumbling up from the cabin and the foc'sle and slipping in an instant outside my barrel I dived behind the fore-sail, made a double towards the stern and came out upon the open deck in time to join Hunter and Dr Livesey in the rush for the weather bow

There all hands were already congregated A belt of fog had lifted almost simultaneously with the appearance of the moon Away to the southwest of us

we saw two low hills, about a couple of miles apart, and rising behind one of them a third and higher hill, whose peak was still buried in the fog. All three seemed sharp and conical in figure.

So much I saw, almost in a dream, for I had not yet recovered from my horrid fear of a minute or two before. And then I heard the voice of Captain Smollett issuing orders. The *Hippaniola* was laid a couple of points nearer the wind, and now sailed a course that would just clear the island on the east.

"And now, men," said the captain, when all was sheeted home, "has any one of you ever seen that land ahead?"

"I have, sir," said Silver. "I've watered there with a trader I was cook in."

"The anchorage is on the south, behind an islet, I fancy?" asked the captain.

"Yes, sir; Skeleton Island they calls it. It were a main place for pirates once, and a hand we had on board knowed all their names for it. That hill to the nor'ard they calls the Fore-mast Hill; there are three hills in a row running south'ard—fore, main, and mizzen, sir. But the main—that's the big 'un with the cloud on it—they usually calls the Spy-glass, by reason of a look-out they kept when they was in the anchorage cleaning; for it's there they cleaned their ships, sir, asking your pardon."

"I have a chart, here," says Captain Smollett. "See if that's the place."

Long John's eyes burned in his head as he took the chart; but, by the fresh look of the paper, I knew he was doomed to disappointment. This was not the map we found in Billy Bones's chest, but an accurate copy, complete in all things—names and heights and soundings—with the single exception of the red crosses and the written notes. Sharp as must have been this annoyance, Silver had the strength of mind to hide it.

"Yes, sir," said he, "this is the spot to be sure; and very prettily drawed out. Who might have done that I wonder? The pirates were too ignorant, I reckon. Ay, here it is; 'Capt. Kidd's Anchorage'—just the name my shipmate called it. There's a strong current runs along the south, and then away nor'ard up the west coast. Right you was, sir," says he, "to haul your wind and keep the weather of the island. Leastways, if such was your intention as to enter and eareen, and there ain't no better place for that in these waters."

"Thank you, my man," says Captain Smollett. "I'll ask you, later on, to give us a help. You may go."

I was surprised at the coolness with which John avowed his knowledge of the island; and I own I was half frightened when I saw him drawing nearer to myself. He did not know, to be sure, that I had overheard his council from the apple barrel, and yet I had, by this time, taken such a horror of his cruelty, duplicity, and power, that I could scarce conceal a shudder when he laid his hand upon my arm.

"Ah," says he, "this here is a sweet spot, this island—a sweet spot for a lad to get ashore on. You'll bathe, and you'll climb trees, and you'll hunt goats, you will; and you'll get aloft on them hills like a goat yourself. Why, it makes me young again. I was going to forget my timber leg, I was. It's a pleasant thing to be young, and have ten toes, and you may lay to that. When you want to

go a bit of exploring you just ask old John and he'll put up a snack for you to take along

And clapping me in the friendliest way upon the shoulder he hobbled off forward and went below

Captain Smollett, the squire and Dr Livesey were talking together on the quarter deck and anxious as I was to tell them my story I durst not interrupt them openly While I was still casting about in my thoughts to find some probable excuse Dr Livesey called me to his side He had left his pipe below and being a slave to tobacco had meant that I should fetch it but as soon as I was near enough to speak and not to be overheard I broke out immediately Doctor let me speak Get the captain and squire down to the cabin and then make some pretence to send for me I have terrible news

The doctor changed countenance a little but next moment he was master of himself

Thank you Jim said he quite loudly that was all I wanted to know as if he had asked me a question

And with that he turned on his heel and rejoined the other two They spoke together for a little and though none of them started or raised his voice or so much as whistled it was plain enough that Dr Livesey had communicated my request for the next thing that I heard was the captain giving an order to Job Anderson and all hands were piped on deck

My lads said Captain Smollett I've a word to say to you This land that we have sighted is the place we have been sailing to Mr Trelawney being a very open handed gentleman as we all know has just asked me a word or two and as I was able to tell him that every man on board had done his duty, a low and aloft as I never ask to see it done better why he and I and the doctor are going below to the cabin to drink *your* health and luck and you'll have grog served out for you to drink *our* health and luck I'll tell you what I think of this I think it handsome And if you think as I do you'll give a good cheer for the gentleman that does it

The cheer followed—that was a matter of course but it rang out so full and hearty that I confess I could hardly believe these same men were plotting for our blood

One more cheer for Cap'n Smollett ' cried Long John, when the first had subsided

And this also was given with a will

On the top of that the three gentlemen went below and not long after word was sent forward that Jim Hawkins was wanted in the cabin

I found them all three seated round the table a bottle of Spanish wine and some raisins before them and the doctor smoking away with his wig on his lap and that I knew was a sign that he was agitated The stern window was open for it was a warm night and you could see the moon shining behind on the ship's wake

Now Hawkins said the squire you have something to say Speak up " I did as I was bid and as short as I could make it, told the whole details

of Silver's conversation. Nobody interrupted me till I was done, nor did any one of the three of them make so much as a movement, but they kept their eyes upon my face from first to last.

"Jim," said Dr. Livesey, "take a seat."

And they made me sit down at table beside them, poured me out a glass of wine, filled my hands with raisins, and all three, one after the other, and each with a bow, drank my good health, and their service to me, for my luck and courage.

"Now, captain," said the squire, "you were right, and I was wrong. I own myself an ass, and I await your orders."

"No more an ass than I, sir," returned the captain. "I never heard of a crew that meant to mutiny but what showed signs before, for any man that had an eye in his head to see the mischief and take steps according. But this crew," he added, "beats me."

"Captain," said the doctor, "with your permission, that's Silver. A very remarkable man."

"He'd look remarkably well from a yard-arm, sir," returned the captain. "But this is talk; this don't lead to anything. I see three or four points, and with Mr. Trelawney's permission, I'll name them."

"You, sir, are the captain. It is for you to speak," says Mr. Trelawney, grandly.

"First point," began Mr. Smollett. "We must go on, because we can't turn back. If I gave the word to go about, they would rise at once. Second point, we have time before us—at least, until this treasure's found. Third point, there are faithful hands. Now, sir, it's got to come to blows sooner or later; and what I propose is, to take time by the forelock, as the saying is, and come to blows some fine day when they least expect it. We can count, I take it, on your own home servants, Mr. Trelawney?"

"As upon myself," declared the squire.

"Three," reckoned the captain, "ourselves make seven, counting Hawkins, here. Now, about the honest hands?"

"Most likely Trelawney's own men," said the doctor; "those he had picked up for himself, before he lit on Silver."

"Nay," replied the squire, "Hands was one of mine."

"I did think I could have trusted hands," added the captain.

"And to think that they're all Englishmen!" broke out the squire. "Sir, I could find it in my heart to blow the ship up."

"Well, gentlemen," said the captain, "the best that I can say is not much. We must lay to, if you please, and keep a bright lookout. It's trying on a man, I know. It would be pleasanter to come to blows. But there's no help for it till we know our men. Lay to, and whistle for a wind, that's my view."

"Jim here," said the doctor, "can help us more than anyone. The men are not shy with him, and Jim is a noticing lad."

"Hawkins, I put prodigious faith in you," added the squire.

I began to feel pretty desperate at this, for I felt altogether helpless; and yet by an odd train of circumstances, it was indeed through me that safety came

In the meantime talk as we pleased there were only seven out of the twenty six on whom we knew we could rely and out of these seven one was a boy, so that the grown men on our side were six to their nineteen

PART III

My Shore Adventure

XIII

How I Began My Shore Adventure

THE APPEARANCE of the island when I came on deck next morning was altogether changed. Although the breeze had now utterly failed we had made a great deal of way during the night and were now lying becalmed about half a mile to the south east of the low eastern coast. Grey coloured woods covered a large part of the surface. This even tint was indeed broken up by streaks of yellow sandbreak in the lower lands and by many tall trees of the pine family out topping the others—some singly some in clumps but the general colouring was uniform and sad. The hills ran up clear above the vegetation in spires of naked rock. All were strangely shaped and the Spy glass which was by three or four hundred feet the tallest on the island was likewise the strangest in configuration running up sheer from almost every side and then suddenly cut off at the top like a pedestal to put a statue on.

The *Hispaniola* was rolling scuppers under in the ocean swell. The booms were tearing at the blocks the rudder was banging to and fro and the whole ship creaking groaning and jumping like a manufactory. I had to cling tight to the backstay and the world turned giddily before my eyes for though I was a good enough sailor when there was way on this standing still and being rolled about like a bottle was a thing I never learned to stand without a qualm or so above all in the morning on an empty stomach.

Perhaps it was this—perhaps it was the look of the island with its grey, melancholy woods and wild stone spires and the surf that we could both see and hear foaming and thundering on the steep beach—at least although the sun shone bright and hot and the shore birds were fishing and crying all around us and you would have thought anyone would have been glad to get to land after being so long at sea my heart sank as the saying is into my boots and from that first look onward I hated the very thought of Treasure Island.

We had a dreary morning's work before us for there was no sign of any wind and the boats had to be got out and manned and the ship warped three or four miles round the corner of the island and up the narrow passage to the haven behind Skeleton Island. I volunteered for one of the boats where I had of course, no business. The heat was sweltering and the men grumbled fiercely

over their work. Anderson was in command of my boat, and instead of keeping the crew in order, he grumbled as loud as the worst.

"Well," he said, with an oath, "it's not for ever."

I thought this was a very bad sign; for, up to that day, the men had gone briskly and willingly about their business; but the very sight of the island had relaxed the cords of discipline.

All the way in, Long John stood by the steersman and conned the ship. He knew the passage like the palm of his hand; and though the man in the chains got everywhere more water than was down in the chart, John never hesitated once.

"There's a strong scour with the ebb," he said, "and this here passage has been dug out, in a manner of speaking, with a spade."

We brought up just where the anchor was in the chart, about a third of a mile from either shore, the mainland on one side, and Skeleton Island on the other. The bottom was clean sand. The plunge of our anchor sent up clouds of birds wheeling and crying over the woods; but in less than a minute they were down again, and all was once more silent.

The place was entirely land-locked, buried in woods, the trees coming right down to high-water mark, the shores mostly flat, and the hill-tops standing round at a distance in a sort of amphitheatre, one here, one there. Two little rivers, or, rather, two swamps, emptied out into this pond, as you might call it; and the foliage round that part of the shore had a kind of poisonous brightness. From the ship, we could see nothing of the house or stockade, for they were quite buried among trees; and if it had not been for the chart on the companion, we might have been the first that had ever anchored there since the island arose out of the seas.

There was not a breath of air moving, nor a sound but that of the surf booming, half a mile away along the beaches and against the rocks outside. A peculiar stagnant smell hung over the anchorage—a smell of sodden leaves and rotted tree trunks. I observed the doctor sniffing and sniffing, like someone tasting a bad egg.

"I don't know about treasure," he said, "but I'll stake my wig there's fever here."

If the conduct of the men had been alarming in the boat, it became truly threatening when they had come aboard. They lay about the deck growling together in talk. The slightest order was received with a black look, and grudgingly and carelessly obeyed. Even the honest hands must have caught the infection, for there was not one man aboard to mend another. Mutiny, it was plain, hung over us like a thundercloud.

And it was not only we of the cabin party who perceived the danger. Long John was hard at work going from group to group, spending himself in good advice, and as for example no man could have shown a better. He fairly outstripped himself in willingness and civility; he was all smiles to everyone. If an order were given, John would be on his crutch in an instant, with the cheeriest "Ay, ay, sir!" in the world; and when there was nothing else to do,

he kept up one song after another as if to conceal the discontent of the rest

Of all the gloomy features of that gloomy afternoon, this obvious anxiety on the part of Long John appeared the worst

We held a council in the cabin

Sir said the captain if I risk another order the whole ship ll come about our ears by the run You see sir here it is I get a rough answer do I not Well, if I speak back pikes will be going in two shakes if I don t Silver will see there s something under that, and the game s up Now, we ve only one man to rely on

And who is that? asked the squire

Silver sir returned the captain he s as anxious as you and I to smother things up This is a tuff he d soon talk em out of it if he had the chance and what I propose to do is to give him the chance Let s allow the men an afternoon ashore If they all go why we ll fight the ship If they none of them go well then we hold the cabin and God defend the right If some go you mark my words sir Silver ll bring em aboard again as mild as lambs

It was so decided loaded pistols were served out to all the sure men Hunter Joyce and Redruth were taken into our confidence and received the news with less surprise and a better spirit than we had looked for and then the captain went on deck and addressed the crew

My lads said he we ve had a hot day, and are all tired and out of sorts A turn ashore ll hurt nobody—the boats are still in the water you can take the gigs and as many as please can go ashore for the afternoon I ll fire a gun half an hour before sundown

I believe the silly fellows must have thought they would break their shins over treasure as soon as they were landed for they all came out of their sulks in a moment and gave a cheer that started the echo in a far-away hill and sent the birds once more flying and squalling round the anchorage

The captain was too bright to be in the way He whipped out of sight in a moment leaving Silver to arrange the party and I fancy it was as well he did so Had he been on deck he could no longer so much as have pretended not to understand the situation It was as plain as day Silver was the captain and a mighty rebellious crew he had of it The honest hands—and I was soon to see it proved that there were such on board—must have been very stupid fellows Or rather I suppose the truth was this that all hands were disaffected by the example of the ringleaders—only some more some less and a few being good fellows in the main could neither be led nor driven any further It is one thing to be idle and skulk, and quite another to take a ship and murder a number of innocent men

At last however the party was made up Six fellows were to stay on board and the remaining thirteen including Silver began to embark

Then it was that there came into my head the first of the mad notions that contributed so much to save our lives If six men were left by Silver it was plain our party could not take and fight the ship and since only six were left it was equally plain that the cabin party had no present need of my assistance It occurred to me at once to go ashore In a jiffy I had slipped over the side

and curled up in the foresheets of the nearest boat and almost at the same moment she shoved off

No one took notice of me only the bow our swing Is that you Jim? Keep your head down But Silver from the other boat lool ed sharply over and called out to I now if thit were me and from that moment I began to regret what I hid done

The crews raced for the beach but the boat I was in having some start and being at once the lighter and the better manned shot far ahead of her consort, and the bow had struck imong the shoreside trees and I had caught a branch and swung myself out and plunged into the nearest thick et while Silver and the rest were still a hundred yards behind

Jim Jim! I heard him shouting

But you may suppose I paid no heed jumping ducking and breaking through, I ran straight before my nose till I could run no longer

XIV

THE FIRST BLOW

I WAS SO PLEASRD at having given the slip to Long John that I began to enjoy myself and look round me with some interest on the strange land that I was in.

I had crossed a marshy tract full of willows bulrushes and odd outlandish, swampy trees, and I had now come out upon the skirts of an open piece of undulating sandy country about a mile long dotted with a few pines and a great number of contorted trees not unlike the oak in growth but pale in the foliage like willows On the far side of the open stood one of the hills, with two quaint craggy peaks shining vividly in the sun

I now felt for the first time the joy of exploration The isle was uninhabited my shipmates I had left behind and nothing lived in front of me but dumb brutes and fowls I turned hither and thither among the trees Here and there were flowering plants unknown to me here and there I saw snakes and one raised his head from a ledge of rock and hissed at me with a noise not unlike the spinning of a top Little did I suppose that he was a deadly enemy and that the noise was the famous rattle

Then I came to a long thicker of these oak like trees—live or evergreen oaks, I heard afterwards they should be called—which grew low along the sand like brambles the boughs curiously twisted the foliage compact like thrush The thick et stretched down from the top of one of the sandy knolls spreading and growing taller as it went, until it reached the margin of the broad reedy fen through which the nearest of the little rivers worked its way into the anchor age The marsh was steaming in the strong sun, and the outline of the Spy glass trembled through the haze

All at once there began to go a sort of bustle among the bulrushes, a wild duck flew up with a quack, another followed, and soon over the whole surface

of the marsh a great cloud of birds hung screaming and circling in the air I judged at once that some of my shipmates must be drawing near along the borders of the fen Nor was I deceived for soon I heard the very distant and low tones of a human voice which as I continued to give ear grew steadily louder and nearer

This put me in a great fear and I crawled under cover of the nearest live-oak and squatted there hearkening as silent as a mouse

Another voice answered and then the first voice which I now recognised to be Silver's once more took up the story and ran on for a long while in a stream only now and again interrupted by the other By the sound they must have been talking earnestly, and almost fiercely, but no distinct word came to my hearing

At last the speakers seemed to have paused and perhaps to have sat down for not only did they cease to draw any nearer but the birds themselves began to grow more quiet and to settle again to their places in the swamp

And now I began to feel that I was neglecting my business that since I had been so foolhardy as to come ashore with these desperadoes the least I could do was to overhear them at their councils and that my plain and obvious duty was to draw as close as I could manage under the favourable ambush of the crouching trees

I could tell the direction of the speakers pretty exactly not only by the sound of their voices but by the behaviour of the few birds that still hung in alarm above the heads of the intruders

Crawling on all fours I made steadily but slowly towards them till at last raising my head to an aperture among the leaves, I could see clear down into a little green dell beside the marsh and closely set about with trees, where Long John Silver and another of the crew stood face to face in conversation.

The sun beat full upon them Silver had thrown his hat beside him on the ground and his great smooth blond face, all shining with heat, was lifted to the other man's in a kind of appeal

Mate, he was saying it's because I thinks gold dust of you—gold dust, and you may lay to that! If I hadn't took to you like pitch do you think I'd have been here a warning of you? All's up—you can't make nor mend it's to save your neck that I'm a speaking and if one of the wild 'uns knew it where ud I be Tom—now tell me where ud I be?

Silver said the other man—and I observed he was not only red in the face, but spoke as hoarse as a crow and his voice shook too like a taut rope—Silver says he you're old and you're honest or has the name for it and you've money too which lots of poor sailors hasn't, and you're brave or I'm mistook And will you tell me you'll let yourself be led away with that kind of a mess of swabs? not you! As sure as God sees me I'd sooner lose my hand If I turn agin my dooty—'

And then all of a sudden he was interrupted by a noise I had found one of the honest hands—well here at that same moment, came news of another Far away out in the marsh there arose all of a sudden a sound like the cry of

anger, then another on the back of it and then one horrid long drawn scream. The roars of the Spy glass re echoed it a score of times the whole troop of marsh-birds rose again drenching heaven with a simultaneous whurr and long after that death yell was still ringing in my brain silence had re established its empire and only the rustle of the redescending birds and the boom of the distant surges disturbed the languor of the afternoon

Tom had leaped at the sound like a horse at the spur but Silver had not winced an eye He stood where he was resting lightly on his crutch watching his companion like a snare about to spring

John! said the sailor, stretching out his hand

'Hands off' cried Silver leaping back a yard as it seemed to me with the speed and security of a trained gymnast

'Hands off if you like, John Silver' said the other 'It's a black conscience that can make you feared of me. But in heaven's name tell me what was that?

That? returned Silver smiling wan but wavier than ever his eye a mere pin point in his big face, but gleaming like a crumb of glass. That? Oh I reckon that'll be Alan

At this poor Tom flushed out like a hero

'Alan!' he cried. Then rest his soul for a true seaman! And as for you, John Silver long you've been a mate of mine but you're a mate of mine no more. If I die like a dog I'll die in my dooty. You've killed Alan have you? Kill me too if you can. But I defies you

And with that this brave fellow turned his back directly on the cook and set off walling for the beach. But he was not destined to go far. With a cry John seized the branch of a tree, whipped the crutch out of his armpit and sent that uncouth missile hurtling through the air. It struck poor Tom point foremost and with stunning violence, right between the shoulders in the middle of his back. His hands flew up he gave a sort of grasp and fell.

Whether he were injured much or little none could ever tell. Like enough to judge from the sound his back was broken on the spot. But he had no time given him to recover. Silver, agile as a monkey even without leg or crutch, was on top of him next moment and had twice buried his knife up to the hilt in that defenceless body. From my place of ambush I could hear him pant aloud as he struck the blows.

I do not know what it rightly is to fume but I do know that for the next little while the whole world swam away from before me in a whirling mist, Silver and the birds and the tall Spy glass hill top going round and round and topsy turvy before my eyes, and ill manner of bells ringing and distant voices shouting in my ear.

When I came again to myself the monster had pulled himself together his crutch under his arm his hat upon his head. Just before him Tom lay motionless upon the sword but the murderer minded him not a whit cleansing his blood stained knife the while upon a wisp of grass. Everything else was unchanged, the sun still shining mercilessly on the steaming marsh and the tall pinnacle of the mountain and I could scarcely persuade myself that murder

had been actually done and a human life cruelly cut short a moment since before my eyes

But now John put his hand into his pocket brought out a whistle and blew upon it several modulated blasts that rang far across the heated air I could not tell of course the meaning of the signal but it instantly awoke my fears More men would be coming I might be discovered They had already slain two of the honest people after Tom and Alan might not I come next?

Instantly I began to extricate myself and crawl back again with what speed and silence I could manage to the more open portion of the wood As I did so I could hear hails coming and going between the old buccaneer and his comrades and this sound of danger lent me wings As soon as I was clear of the thicket I ran as I never ran before scarce minding the direction of my flight, so long as it led me from the murderers and as I ran fear grew and grew upon me until it turned into a kind of frenzy

Indeed could anyone be more entirely lost than I? When the gun fired how should I dare to go down to the boats amongst those fiends still smoking from their crime? Would not the first of them who saw me wring my neck like a snipe? Would not my absence itself be an evidence to them of my alarm and therefore of my fatal knowledge? It was all over I thought Good bye to the *Hispaniola*, good bye to the squire the doctor the captain! There was nothing left for me but death by starvation or death by the hands of the mutineers

All this while as I say I was still running and without taking any notice I had drawn near the foot of the little hill with the two peaks and had got into a part of the island where the live oaks grew more widely apart, and seemed more like forest trees in their bearing and dimensions Mingled with these were a few scattered pines some fifty some nearer seventy feet high The air, too, smelt more freshly than down beside the marsh

And here a fresh alarm brought me to a standstill with a thumping heart.

XV

THE MAN OF THE ISLAND

FROM the side of the hill which was here steep and stony a spout of gravel was dislodged and fell rattling and bounding through the trees My eyes turned instinctively in that direction and I saw a figure leap with great rapidity behind the trunk of a pine What it was whether bear or man or monkey I could in no wise tell It seemed dark and shaggy, more I knew not But the terror of this new apparition brought me to a stand

I was now it seemed cut off upon both sides behind me the murderers, before me this lurking nondescript And immediately I began to prefer the dangers that I knew to those I knew not Silver himself appeared less terrible in contrast with this creature of the woods and I turned on my heel and looking sharply behind me over my shoulder began to retrace my steps in the direction of the boats

Instantly the figure reappeared and making a wide circuit began to head me off I was tired at any rate but had I been as fresh as when I rose I could see it was in vain for me to contend in speed with such an adversary From trunk to trunk the creature flitted like a deer running manlike on two legs but unlike any man that I had ever seen stooping almost double as it ran Yet a man it was I could no longer be in doubt about that

I began to recall what I had heard of cannibals I was within an ace of calling for help But the mere fact that he was a man however wild had somewhat reassured me and my fear of Silver began to revive in proportion I stood still therefore and cast about for some method of escape and as I was so thinking the recollection of my pistol flashed into my mind As soon as I remembered I was not defenceless courage glowed again in my heart and I set my face resolutely for this man of the island and walked briskly towards him

He was concealed by this time behind another tree trunk but he must have been watching me closely for as soon as I began to move in his direction he reappeared and took a step to meet me Then he hesitated drew back came forward again and at last to my wonder and confusion threw himself on his knees and held out his clasped hands in supplication

At that I once more stopped

'Who are you?' I asked

'Ben Gunn' he answered and his voice sounded hoarse and awkward like a rusty lock I'm poor Ben Gunn I am and I haven't spoke with a Christian these three years

I could now see that he was a white man like myself and that his features were even pleasing His skin wherever it was exposed was burnt by the sun even his lips were black, and his fair eyes looked quite startling in so dark a face Of all the beggar men that I had seen or fancied he was the chief for raggedness He was clothed with tatters of old ship's canvas and old sea cloth, and this extraordinary patchwork was all held together by a system of the most various and incongruous fastenings brass buttons bits of stick and loops of tarry gasl in About his waist he wore an old brass buckled leather belt, which was the one thing solid in his whole accoutrement

'Three years!' I cried 'Were you shipwrecked?'

'Nay mate said he— marooned'

I had heard the word and I knew it stood for a horrible kind of punishment common enough among the buccaneers in which the offender is put ashore with a little powder and shot and left behind on some desolate and distant island

'Marooned three years *agone*' he continued 'and lived on goats since then and berries, and oysters Wherever a man is, says I 'a man can do for himself But mate, my heart is sore for Christian diet You mightn't happen to have a piece of cheese about you now? No? Well many's the long night I've dreamed of cheese—toasted mostly—and woke up again and here I were'

'If ever I can get on board again,' said I, "you shall have cheese by the stone"

All this time he had been feeling the stuff of my jacket smoothing my hands, looking at my boots and generally in the intervals of his speech showing

childish pleasure in the presence of a fellow creature But at my last words he perked up into a kind of startled slyness

If ever you can get aboard again says you? he repeated Why now who's to hinder you?

Not you I know' was my reply

And right you was he cried Now you—what do you call yourself mate?" " Jim I told him

'Jim Jim says he quite pleased apparently Well now Jim I've lived that rough as you'd be ashamed to hear of Now for instance you wouldn't think I had had a pious mother—to look at me? he asked

Why no not in particular I answered

Ah well said he but I had—remarkable pious And I was a civil pious boy and could rattle off my catechism that fast as you couldn't tell one word from another And here's what it come to Jim and it begun with chuck-farthen on the blessed grave stones! That's what it begun with but it went further n that and so my mother told me and predicked the whole she did the pious woman! But it were Providence that put me here I've thought it all out in this here lonely island and I'm back on piety You don't catch me tasting rum so much but just a thimbleful for luck of course the first chance I have I'm bound I'll be good and I see the way to And Jim —looking all round him, and lowering his voice to a whisper— I'm rich

I now felt sure that the poor fellow had gone crazy in his solitude and I suppose I must have shown the feeling in my face for he repeated the statement hotly —

Rich! rich! I says And I'll tell you what I'll make a man of you Jim. Ah, Jim you'll bless your stars you will you was the first that found me!

And at this there came suddenly a lowering shadow over his face and he tightened his grasp upon my hand and raised a forefinger threateningly before my eyes

Now Jim you tell me true that ain't Flint's ship? he asked

At this I had a happy inspiration I began to believe that I had found an ally and I answered him at once

It's not Flint's ship and Flint is dead but I'll tell you true as you ask me—there are some of Flint's hands aboard worse luck for the rest of us

Not a man—with one-leg? he gasped

Silver? I asked

'Ah Silver!' says he that were his name

He's the cook and the ringleader too

He was still holding me by the wrist, and at that he gave it quite a wring

If you was sent by Long John he said I'm as good as pork and I know it But where was you do you suppose?

I had made my mind up in a moment and by way of answer told him the whole story of our voyage and the treatment in which we found ourselves He heard me with the keenest interest, and when I had done he patted me on the head

You're a good lad, Jim, he said, "and you're all in a clever bunch, ain't you?"

Well you just put your trust in Ben Gunn—Ben Gunn's the man to do it. Would you think it likely now that your squire would prove a liberal minded one in case of help—him being in a close hitch is you rememb'.

I told him the squire was the most liberal of men.

Ay but you see returned Ben Gunn I didn't mean giving me a gate to keep and a shirt of livery clothes and such that's not my mark Jim What I mean is would he be likely to come down to the toon of say one thousand pounds out of money that's as good as a man's own already.

I am sure he would said I As it was all hands were to share.

'And a passage home he added with a look of great shrewdness.

Why I cried the squire's a gentleman And besides if we got rid of the others we should want you to help work the vessel home.

Ah said he so you would And he seemed very much relieved.

'Now I'll tell you what he went on So much I'll tell you and no more I were in Flint's ship when he buried the treasure he and six along—six strong scummen They were ashore nigh on a week and us standing off and on in the old *Habrus* One fine day up went the signal and here come Flint himself in a little boat and his he'd done up in a blue scut. The sun was getting up and mortal white he looked about the cut water but there he was you mark and the six all dead—dead and buried How he done it not a man aboard us could mark out It was bitter murder and sudden death I saw it—him against six Billy Bones was the mate Long John he was quartermaster and they asked him where the treasure was Ah says he you can go ashore if you like and stay he says but as for the ship she'll beat up for more by thunder! That's what he said.

Well I was in another ship three years back and we sighted this island Boys said I here's Flint's treasure let's land and find it The cap'n was displeased at that but my messmates were all of a mind and landed Twelve days they looked for it and every day they had the worse word for me until one fine morning all hands went aboard As for you Benjamin Gunn says they here's a musket they says and a spade and pick ax You can stay here and find Flint's money for yourself they says.

Well Jim, three years have I been here and not a bite of Christian diet from that day to this But now you look here look at me Do I look like a man before the mate? No says you Nor I weren't neither I says.

With that he would and pinched me hard.

Just you mention them words to your squire Jim—he went on Nor he weren't neither—that's the words Three years he were the man of this island, light and dark fur and fun and sometimes he would maybe think upon a prayer (says you), and sometimes he would maybe think of his old mother, so be as she's alive (you'll say) but the most part of Gunn's time (this is what you'll say)—the most part of his time was took up with mother matter And then you'll give him a nip like I do.

And he pinched me again in the most confidential manner.

Then he continued—then you'll up, and you'll say this—Gunn is a good man (you'll say), and he puts a precious sight more confidence—a precious

sight mind that—in a gen leman born than in these gen lemen of fortune having been one hussell

Well I said I don't understand one word that you've been saying But that's neither here nor there for how am I to get on board?

Ah said he that's the hitch for sure Well there's my boat that I made with my two hands I keep her under the white rock If the worst comes to the worst we might try that after dark Hi! he broke out what's that?

For just then although the sun had still an hour or two to run all the echoes of the island awoke and bellowed to the thunder of a cannon

They have begun to fight! I cried Follow me

And I began to run towards the anchorage my terrors all forgotten while close at my side the marooned man in his goatskins trotted easily and lightly

Left left says he keep to your left hand mate Jim! Under the trees with you! Theer's where I killed my first goat They don't come down here now they're all mast headed on them mountings for the fear of Benjamin Gunn Ah! and there's the ceteremery —cemetery he must have meant You see the mounds? I come here and prayed nows and thens when I thought maybe a Sunday would be about doo It weren't quite a chapel but it seemed more solemn like and then says you Ben Gunn was short handed—no chapling nor so much as a Bible and a flag you says

So he kept talking as I ran neither expecting nor receiving any answer

The cannon shot was followed after a considerable interval by a volley of small arms

Another pause and then not a quarter of a mile in front of me, I beheld the Union Jack flutter in the air above a wood

PART IV THE STOCKADE

XVI

NARRATIVE CONTINUED BY THE DOCTOR HOW THE SHIP WAS ABANDONED

It was about half past one—three bells in the sea phrase—that the two boats went ashore from the *Hispaniola* The captain the squire and I were talking matters over in the cabin Had there been a breath of wind we should have fallen on the six mutineers who were left aboard with us slipped our cable and away to sea But the wind was wanting and to complete our helplessness down came Hunter with the news that Jim Hawkins had slipped into a boat and was gone ashore with the rest

It never occurred to us to doubt Jim Hawkins but we were alarmed for his safety With the men in the temper they were in it seemed an even chance if we should see the lad again We ran on deck The pitch was bubbling in

the seams the nasty stench of the place turned me sick if ever man smelt fever and dysentery it was in that abominable anchorage The six scoundrels were sitting grumbling under a sail in the forecastle ashore we could see the gigs made fast and a man sitting in each hard by where the river runs in One of them was whistling Lillibullero

Waiting was a strain, and it was decided that Hunter and I should go ashore with the jolly boat in quest of information The gigs had leaned to their right but Hunter and I pulled straight in in the direction of the stockade upon the chart The two who were left guarding their boats seemed in a bustle at our appearance Lillibullero stopped off and I could see the pair discussing what they ought to do Had they gone and told Silver all might have turned out differently but they had their orders I suppose and decided to sit quietly where they were and hark back again to Lillibullero

There was a slight bend in the coast and I steered so as to put it between us even before we landed we had thus lost sight of the gigs I jumped out, and came as near running as I durst with a big silk handkerchief under my hat for coolness sake and a brace of pistols ready primed for safety

I had not gone a hundred yards when I came on the stockade

This was how it was a spring of clear water rose almost at the top of a knoll Well on the knoll and enclosing the spring they had clapped a stout log house fit to hold two score people on a pinch and loop holed for musketry on every side All round this they had cleared a wide space and then the thing was completed by a palisade six feet high without door or opening too strong to pull down without time and labour and too open to shelter the besiegers The people in the log house had them in every way they stood quiet in shelter and shot the others like partridges All they wanted was a good watch and food, for short of a complete surprise they might have held the place against a regiment

What particularly took my fancy was the spring For though we had a good enough place of it in the cabin of the *Hispaniola*, with plenty of arms and ammunition and things to eat and excellent wines there had been one thing overlooked—we had no water I was thinking this over when there came ringing over the island the cry of a man at the point of death I was not new to violent death—I have served his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland and got a wound myself at Fontenoy—but I know my pulse went dot and carry one Jim Hawlins is gone was my first thought

It is something to have been an old soldier but more still to have been a doctor There is no time to dilly dally in our worl And so now I made up my mind instantly and with no time lost returned to the shore and jumped on board the jolly boat

By good fortune Hunter pulled a good oar We made the water fly and the boat was soon alongside and I aboard the schooner

I found them all shaken as was natural The squire was sitting down as white as a sheet thinking of the harin he had led us to, the good soul and one of the six forecastle hands was little better

There's a man, says Captain Smollett, nodding towards him 'new to

this work He came nigh hand fainting doctor when he heard the cry
Another touch of the rudder and that man would join us

I told my plan to the captain and between us we settled on the details of
its accomplishment

We put old Redruth in the gallery between the cabin and the forecastle,
with three or four loaded muskets and a mattress for protection Hunter
brought the boat round under the stern port and Joyce and I set to work
loading her with powder tins muskets bags of biscuits, kegs of pork, a cask
of cognac and my invaluable medicine chest

In the meantime the squire and the captain stayed on deck and the latter
hailed the coxswain who was the principal man aboard

Mr Hands he said here are two of us with a brace of pistols each If
any one of you six make a signal of any description that man's dead

They were a good deal taken aback and after a little consultation one and
all tumbled down the fore companion thinking no doubt, to take us on the
rear But when they saw Redruth waiting for them in the sparred gallery they
went about ship at once and a head popped out again on deck

Down dog' cries the captain

And the head popped back again and we heard no more, for a time, of
these six very faint hearted seamen

By this time tumbling things in as they came we had the jolly boat loaded
as much as we dared Joyce and I got through the stern port, and we made
for shore again as fast as oars could take us

This second trip fairly aroused the watchers along shore Lillibullero was
dropped again and just before we lost sight of them behind the little point
one of them whipped ashore and disappeared I had half a mind to change
my plan and destroy their boats but I feared that Silver and the others might
be close at hand and all might very well be lost by trying for too much

We had soon touched land in the same place as before and set to provision
the block house All three made the first journey heavily laden and tossed our
stores over the palisade Then leaving Joyce to guard them—one man to be
sure but with half a dozen muskets—Hunter and I returned to the jolly-boat
and loaded ourselves once more So we proceeded without pausing to take
breath till the whole cargo was bestowed when the two servants took up their
position in the block house and I with all my power sculled back to the
Hispaniola

That we should have risked a second boat load seems more daring than it
really was They had the advantage of numbers of course but we had the
advantage of arms Not one of the men ashore had a musket and before they
could get within range for pistol shooting we flattered ourselves we should
be able to give a good account of a half-dozen at least

The squire was waiting for me at the stern window all his faintness gone
from him He caught the painter and made it fast and we fell to loading the
boat for our very lives Pork powder, and biscuit was the cargo with only a
musket and a cutlass apiece for squire and me and Redruth and the captain
The rest of the arms and powder we dropped overboard in two fathoms and

a half of water so that we could see the bright steel shining far below us in the sun on the clean sandy bottom

By this time the tide was beginning to ebb and the ship was swinging round to her anchor Voices were heard faintly hallooing in the direction of the two gigs and though this reassured us for Joyce and Hunter who were well to the eastward it warned our party to be off

Redruth retreated from his place in the gallery and dropped into the boat, which we then brought round to the ship's counter to be handier for Captain Smollett

Now men " said he do you hear me? "

There was no answer from the forecastle

It's to you Abraham Gray—it's to you I am speaking ,

Still no reply

Gray resumed Mr Smollett a little louder ' I am leaving this ship and I order you to follow your captain I know you are a good man at bottom, and I daresay not one of the lot of you's as bad as he makes out I have my watch here in my hand I give you thirty seconds to join me in

There was a pause

Come my fine fellow ' continued the captain don't hang so long in stays I'm risking my life and the lives of these good gentlemen every second '

There was a sudden scuffle a sound of blows and out burst Abraham Gray with a knife cut on the side of the cheek and came running to the captain, like a dog to the whistle

I'm with you sir " said he

And the next moment he and the captain had dropped aboard of us and we had shoved off and given way

We were clear out of the ship but not yet ashore in our stockade

XVII

NARRATIVE CONTINUED BY THE DOCTOR THE JOLLY BOAT'S LAST TRIP

THIS FIFTH TRIP was quite different from any of the others In the first place the little gallipot of a boat that we were in was gravely overloaded Five grown men and three of them—Trelawney Redruth and the captain—over six feet high, was already more than she was meant to carry Add to that the powder pork and bread bags The gunwale was lipping astern Several times we shipped a little water and my breeches and the tails of my coat were all soaking wet before we had gone a hundred yards

The captain made us trim the boat and we got her to lie a little more evenly All the same we were afraid to breathe

In the second place the ebb was now making—a strong rippling current running westward through the basin and then southward and seaward down the straits by which we had entered in the morning Even the ripples were a danger to our overloaded craft, but the worst of it was that we were swept

out of our true course and away from our proper landing-place behind the point If we let the current have its way we should come ashore beside the gigs where the pirates might appear at any moment

I cannot keep her head for the stockade sir said I to the captain I was steering while he and Redruth two fresh men were at the oars 'The tide keeps washing her down Could you pull a little stronger'

Not without swamping the boat said he You must bear up, sir if you please—bear up until you see you're gaining

I tried and found by experiment that the tide kept sweeping us westward until I had laid her head due east or just about right angles to the way we ought to go

We'll never get ashore at this rate said I

If it's the only course that we can lie sir we must even lie it returned the captain We must keep upstream You see, sir he went on if once we dropped to leeward of the landing place it's hard to say where we should get ashore besides the chance of being boarded by the gigs whereas the way we go the current must slacken and then we can dodge back along the shore

The current's less a ready sir said the man Gray, who was sitting in the foresheets you can ease her off a bit

Thank you my man said I quite as if nothing had happened, for we had all quietly made up our minds to treat him like one of ourselves

Suddenly the captain spoke up again, and I thought his voice was a little changed

The gun! said he

I have thought of that said I for I made sure he was thinking of a bombardment of the fort They could never get the gun ashore, and if they did they could never haul it through the woods

'Look astern doctor, replied the captain

We had entirely forgotten the long nine and there to our horror were the five rogues busy about her getting off her jacket as they called the stout tarpaulin cover under which she sailed Not only that but it flashed into my mind at the same moment that the round shot and the powder for the gun had been left behind and a stroke with an axe would put it all into the possession of the evil ones aboard

Israel was Flint's gunner said Gray hoarsely

At any risk we put the boat's head directly for the landing place By this time we had got so far out of the run of the current that we kept steerage way even at our necessarily gentle rate of rowing and I could keep her steady for the goal But the worst of it was that with the course I now held we turned our broadside instead of our stern to the *Hispaniola*, and offered a target like a barn door

I could hear as well as see that brandy-faced rascal, Israel Hands, plumping down a round shot on the deck

'Who's the best shot?' asked the captain

'Mr Trelawney out and away said I

Mr Trelawney will you please pick me off one of these men sir? Hands, if possible said the captain

Trelawney was as cool as steel He looked to the priming of his gun

Now cried the captain easy with that gun sir or you'll swamp the boat All hands stand by to trim her when he aims

The squire raised his gun the rowing ceased and we leaned over to the other side to keep the balance, and all was so nicely contrived that we did not ship a drop

They had the gun by this time slewed round upon the swivel and Hands who was at the muzzle with the rammer was in consequence the most exposed However we had no luck, for just as Trelawney fired down he stooped the ball whistled over him and it was one of the other four who fell

The cry he gave was echoed not only by his companions on board but by a great number of voices from the shore and looking in that direction I saw the other pirates trooping out from among the trees and tumbling into their places in the boats

Here comes the gigs sir said I

Give way then cried the captain 'We mustn't mind if we swamp her now If we can't get ashore all's up

Only one of the gigs is being manned sir ' I added, the crew of the other most likely going round by shore to cut us off

They'll have a hot run sir returned the captain Jack's ashore you know It's not them I mind it's the round shot Carpet-bowls! My lady's maid couldn't miss Tell us squire when you see the match, and we'll hold water

In the meanwhile we had been making headway at a good pace for a boat so overloaded and we had shipped but little water in the process We were now close in thirty or forty strokes and we should beach her for the ebb had already disclosed a narrow belt of sand below the clustering trees The gig was no longer to be feared the little point had already concealed it from our eyes The ebb-tide which had so cruelly delayed us was now making reparation, and delaying our assailants The one source of danger was the gun

If I durst said the captain I'd stop and pick off another man

But it was plain that they meant nothing should delay their shot They had never so much as looked at their fallen comrade though he was not dead and I could see him trying to crawl away

'Ready!' cried the squire

'Hold!' cried the captain quick as an echo

And he and Redruth backed with a great heave that sent her stern bodily under water The report fell in at the same instant of time This was the first that Jim heard, the sound of the squire's shot not having reached him Where the ball passed not one of us precisely knew but I fancy it must have been over our heads and that the wind of it may have contributed to our disaster

At any rate the boat sank by the stern quite gently in three feet of water, leaving the captain and myself facing each other on our feet The other three took complete headers and came up again drenched and bubbling

So far there was no great harm. No lives were lost and we could wade ashore in safety. But there were all our stores at the bottom and to make things worse only two guns out of five remained in a state for service. Mine I had snatched from my knees and held over my head by a sort of instinct. As for the captain he had carried his over his shoulder by a bandoleer and like a wise man lock uppermost. The other three had gone down with the boat.

To add to our concern we heard voices already drawing near us in the woods along shore and we had not only the danger of being cut off from the stockade in our half-crippled state, but the fear before us whether if Hunter and Joyce were attacked by half a dozen they would have the sense and conduct to stand firm. Hunter was steady that we knew, Joyce was a doubtful case—a pleasant polite man for a valet and to brush one's clothes, but not entirely fitted for a man of war.

With all this in our minds, we waded ashore as fast as we could leaving behind us the poor jolly-boat, and a good half of all our powder and provisions.

XVIII

NARRATIVE CONTINUED BY THE DOCTOR. END OF THE FIRST DAY'S FIGHTING

We MADE our best speed across the strip of wood that now divided us from the stockade, and at every step we took the voices of the buccaneers rang nearer. Soon we could hear their footfalls as they ran and the cracking of the branches as they breasted across a bit of thicket.

I began to see we should have a brush for it in earnest and looked to my priming.

Captain, said I Trelawney is the dead shot. Give him your gun, his own is useless.

They exchanged guns and Trelawney silent and cool as he had been since the beginning of the bustle hung a moment on his heel to see that all was fit for service. At the same time observing Gray to be unarmed I handed him my cutlass. It did all our hearts good to see him spit in his hand, knit his brows and make the blade sing through the air. It was plain from every line of his body that our new hand was worth his salt.

Forty paces farther we came to the edge of the wood and saw the stockade in front of us. We struck the enclosure about the middle of the south side and almost at the same time seven mutineers—Job Anderson the boatswain at their head—appeared in full cry at the southwestern corner.

They paused as if taken aback and before they recovered not only the squire and I but Hunter and Joyce from the block house had time to fire. The four shots came in rather a scattering volley but they did the business. One of the enemy actually fell and the rest without hesitation, turned and plunged into the trees.

After reloading we walked down the outside of the palisade to see the fallen enemy. He was stone dead—shot through the heart.

We began to rejoice over our good success when just at that moment a pistol cracked in the bush a ball whistled close past my ear and poor Tom Redruth stumbled and fell his length on the ground Both the squire and I returned the shot, but as we had nothing to aim at it is probable we only wasted powder Then we reloaded and turned our attention to poor Tom

The captain and Gray were already examining him, and I saw with half an eye that all was over

I believe the readiness of our return volley had scattered the mutineers once more for we were suffered without further molestation to get the poor old gamekeeper hoisted over the stockade and carried groaning and bleeding into the log house

Poor old fellow, he had not uttered one word of surprise complaint fear, or even acquiescence from the very beginning of our troubles till now when we had laid him down in the log house to die He had lain like a Trojan behind his mattress in the gallery he had followed every order silently doggedly, and well he was the oldest of our party by a score of years and now sullen old serviceable servant it was he that was to die

The squire dropped down beside him on his knees and kissed his hand, crying like a child

‘Be I going doctor?’ he asked

‘Tom my man said I you’re going home’

‘I wish I had had a lick at them with the gun first’ he replied

‘Tom said the squire say you forgive me won’t you?’

‘Would that be respectful like from me to you squire?’ was the answer
Howsoever so be it amen’

After a little while of silence he said he thought somebody might read a prayer It’s the custom sir he added apologetically And not long after, without another word he passed away

In the meantime the captain whom I had observed to be wonderfully swollen about the chest and pockets had turned out a great many various stores—the British colours, a Bible, a coil of stoutish rope pen ink the log book and pounds of tobacco He had found a longish fir tree lying felled and cleared in the enclosure and with the help of Hunter he had set it up at the corner of the log house where the trunks crossed and made an angle Then, climbing on the roof he had with his own hand bent and run up the colours

This seemed mightily to relieve him He re entered the log house and set about counting up the stores as if nothing else existed But he had an eye on Tom’s passage for all that and as soon as all was over, came forward with another flag and reverently spread it on the body

Don’t you take on sir he said shaking the squire’s hand ‘All’s well with him no fear for a hand that’s been shot down in his duty to captain and owner It mayn’t be good divinity, but it’s a fact’

Then he pulled me aside

Dr Livesey’ he said, in how many weeks do you and squire expect the consort?

I told him it was a question, not of weeks, but of months, that if we were

not back by the end of August Blandly was to send to find us, but neither sooner nor later 'You can calculate for yourself' I said

Why yes returned the captain scratching his head and making a large allowance sir for all the gifts of Providence I should say we were pretty close hauled

How do you mean? I asked

It's a pity sir we lost that second load That's what I mean replied the captain As for powder and shot we'll do But the rations are short very short—so short Dr Livesey that we're perhaps as well without that extra mouth

And he pointed to the dead body under the flag

Just then with a roar and a whistle a round shot passed high above the roof of the log house and plumped far beyond us in the wood

Ohoh! said the captain Blaze away! You've little enough powder already my lads

At the second trial the aim was better and the ball descended inside the stockade scattering a cloud of sand but doing no further damage

Captain said the squire the house is quite invisible from the ship It must be the flag they are aiming at Would it not be wiser to take it in?

Strike my colours! cried the captain No sir not I and as soon as he had said the words I think we all agreed with him For it was not only a piece of stout seamanly good feeling it was good policy besides and showed our enemies that we despised their cannonade

All through the evening they kept thundering away Ball after ball flew over or fell short or kicked up the sand in the enclosure but they had to fire so high that the shot fell dead and buried itself in the soft sand We had no ricochet to fear and though one popped in through the roof of the log house and out again through the floor we soon got used to that sort of horse play, and minded it no more than cricket

There is one thing good about all this observed the captain the wood in front of us is likely clear The ebb has made a good while our stores should be uncovered Volunteers to go and bring in pork

Gray and Hunter were the first to come forward Well armed they stole out of the stockade but it proved a useless mission The mutineers were bolder than we fancied or they put more trust in Israel's gunnery For four or five of them were busy carrying off our stores and wading out with them to one of the gigs that lay close by pulling an oar or so to hold her steady against the current Silver was in the stern sheets in command and every man of them was now provided with a musket from some secret magazine of their own

The captain sat down to his log and here is the beginning of the entry —

Alexander Smollett master David Livesey ship's doctor Abraham Gray carpenter's mate John Trelawney owner John Hunter and Richard Joyce, owner's servants landsmen—being all that is left faithful of the ship's company—with stores for ten days at short rations came ashore this day and flew British colours on the log house in Treasure Island Thomas Redruth owner's servant, landsman shot by the mutineers James Hawkins, cabin-boy—

And at the same time I was wondering over poor Jim Hawkins' fate
 A hail on the land side
 Somebody hailing us said Hunter who was on guard
 'Doctor' squire' captain' Hullo Hunter is that you? came the cries
 And I ran to the door in time to see Jim Hawkins, safe and sound come
 climbing over the stockade

XIX

NARRATIVE RESUMED BY JIM HAWKINS THE GARRISON IN THE STOCKADE

As soon as Ben Gunn saw the colours he came to a halt stopped me by the arm and sat down

Now said he there's your friends sure enough"

Far more likely it's the mutineers I answered

That! he cried Why in a place like this where nobody puts in but gen lemen of fortune Silver would fly the Jolly Roger you don't make no doubt of that No that's your friends There's been blows too and I reckon your friends has had the best of it and here they are ashore in the old stockade, as was made years and years ago by Flint Ah he was the man to have a head piece was Flint! Barring rum his match were never seen He was afraid of none not he only Silver—Silver was that genteel

Well, said I that may be so and so be it all the more reason that I should hurry on and join my friends

Nay mate returned Ben not you You're a good boy or I'm mistook, but you're on y a boy all told Now Ben Gunn is fly Rum wouldn't bring me there where you're going—not rum wouldn't till I see your born gen leman, and gets it on his word of honour And you won't forget my words! A precious sight (that's what you'll say) a precious sight more confidence—and then nips him

And he pinched me the third time with the same air of cleverness

And when Ben Gunn is wanted you know where to find him Jim Just wheer you found him to day And him that comes is to have a white thing in his hand and he's to come alone Oh! and you'll say this Ben Gunn says you, has reasons of his own

Well said I, I believe I understand You have something to propose and you wish to see the squire or the doctor, and you're to be found where I found you Is that all?

And when? says you ' he added Why, from about noon observation to about six bells

Good said I and now may I go?

You won't forget? he inquired anxiously Precious sight and reasons of his own, says you Reasons of his own, that's the mainstay as between man and man Well, then—still holding me—I reckon you can go Jim And Jim, if you was see Silver you wouldn't go for to sell Ben Gunn's wild horses wouldn't

draw it from you? No says you And if them pirates camp ashore, Jim, what would you say but there'd be widders in the morning?

Here he was interrupted by a loud report and a cannon ball came tearing through the trees and pitched in the sand not a hundred yards from where we two were talking The next moment each of us had taken to his heels in a different direction

For a good hour to come frequent reports shook the island and balls kept crashing through the woods I moved from hiding place to hiding place always pursued or so it seemed to me by these terrifying missiles But towards the end of the bombardment though still I durst not venture in the direction of the stockade where the balls fell oftenest I had begun in a manner, to pluck up my heart again, and after a long detour to the east, crept down among the shore-side trees

The sun had just set the sea breeze was rustling and tumbling in the woods and ruffling the grey surface of the anchorage the tide, too, was far out and great tracts of sand lay uncovered, the air after the heat of the day, chilled me through my jacket

The *Hispaniola* still lay where she had anchored, but, sure enough there was the Jolly Roger—the black flag of piracy—flying from her peak Even as I looked there came another red flash and another report that sent the echoes clattering and one more round-shot whistled through the air It was the last of the cannonade

I lay for some time watching the bustle which succeeded the attack Men were demolishing something with axes on the beach near the stockade the poor jolly boat I afterwards discovered Away near the mouth of the river a great fire was glowing among the trees and between that point and the ship one of the gigs kept coming and going the men whom I had seen so gloomy shouting at the oars like children But there was a sound in their voices which suggested rum

At length I thought I might return towards the stockade I was pretty far down on the low sandy spit that incloses the anchorage to the east and is joined at half water to Skeleton Island, and now as I rose to my feet, I saw some distance further down the spit and rising from among low bushes an isolated rock pretty high and peculiarly white in colour It occurred to me that this might be the white rock of which Ben Gunn had spoken and that some day or other a boat might be wanted and I should know where to look for one

Then I skirted among the woods until I had regained the rear, or shoreward side of the stockade and was soon warmly welcomed by the faithful party

I had soon told my story and began to look about me The log-house was made of unsquared trunks of pine—roofs walls and floor The latter stood in several places as much as a foot or a foot and a half above the surface of the sand There was a porch at the door and under this porch the little spring welled up into an artificial basin of a rather odd kind—no other than a great ship's kettle of iron with the bottom knocked out, and sunk to her bearings, as the captain said among the sand

Little had been left beside the framework of the house but in one corner there was a stone slab laid down by way of hearth and an old rusty iron basket to contain the fire

The slopes of the knoll and all the inside of the stockade had been cleared of timber to build the house and we could see by the stumps what a fine and lofty grove had been destroyed. Most of the soil had been washed away or buried in drift after the removal of the trees only where the streamlet ran down from the kettle a thick bed of moss and some ferns and little creeping bushes were still green among the sand. Very close around the stockade—too close for defence they said—the wood still flourished high and dense all of fir on the land side but towards the sea with a large admixture of live oaks

The cold evening breeze of which I have spoken, whistled through every chunk of the rude building and sprinkled the floor with a continual rain of fine sand. There was sand in our eyes sand in our teeth sand in our suppers sand dancing in the spring at the bottom of the kettle for all the world like porridge beginning to boil. Our chimney was a square hole in the roof it was but a little part of the smoke that found its way out and the rest eddied about the house, and kept us coughing and piping the eye

Add to this that Gray the new man had his face tied up in a bandage for a cut he had got in breaking away from the mutineers and that poor old Tom Redruth still unburned lay along the wall, stiff and stark under the Union Jack

If we had been allowed to sit idle we should all have fallen into the blues, but Captain Smollett was never the man for that. All hands were called up before him and he divided us into watches. The doctor and Gray and I for one the squire Hunter and Joyce upon the other. Tired as we all were two were sent out for firewood two more were set to dig a grave for Redruth the doctor was named cook I was put sentry at the door and the captain himself went from one to another keeping up our spirits and lending a hand wherever it was wanted

From time to time the doctor came to the door for a little air and to rest his eyes which were almost smoked out of his head, and whenever he did so he had a word for me

That man Smollett' he said once is a better man than I am. And when I say that it means a deal Jim

Another time he came and was silent for a while. Then he put his head on one side and looked at me

Is this Ben Gunn a man? he asked

I do not know sir said I I am not very sure whether he's sane

If there's any doubt about the matter he is' returned the doctor. A man who has been three years biting his nails on a desert island Jim can't expect to appear as sane as you or me. It doesn't lie in human nature. Was it cheese you said he had a fancy for?

Yes sir cheese I answered

Well Jim says he just see the good that comes of being dainty in your food. You've seen my snuff box haven't you? And you never saw me take

snuff the reason being that in my snuff box I carry a piece of Parmesan cheese—a cheese made in Italy very nutritious Well that's for Ben Gunn'

Before supper was eaten we buried old Tom in the sand and stood round him for a while bareheaded in the breeze A good deal of firewood had been got in but not enough for the captain's fancy and he shook his head over it and told us we must get back to this to morrow rather livelier Then when we had eaten our pork and each had a good stiff glass of brandy grog the three chiefs got together in a corner to discuss our prospects

It appears they were at their wits end what to do the stores being so low that we must have been starved into surrender long before help came But our best hope it was decided was to kill off the buccaneers until they either hauled down their flag or ran away with the *Hispaniola* From nineteen they were already reduced to fifteen two others were wounded and one at least—the man shot beside the gun—severely wounded if he were not dead Every time we had a crack at them we were to take it saving our own lives with the extremest care And besides that we had two able allies—rum and the climate

As for the first though we were about half a mile away we could hear them roaring and singing late into the night and as for the second the doctor staked his wig that camped where they were in the marsh and unprovided with remedies the half of them would be on their backs before a week

So, he added if we are not all shot down first they'll be glad to be packing in the schooner It's always a ship and they can get to buccaneering again I suppose

First ship that ever I lost said Captain Smollett

I was dead tired as you may fancy and when I got to sleep which was not till after a great deal of tossing I slept like a log of wood

The rest had long been up and had already breakfasted and increased the pile of firewood by about half as much again when I was awakened by a bustle and the sound of voices

Flag of truce! I heard someone say, and then, immediately after with a cry of surprise Silver himself!

And at that up I jumped and rubbing my eyes ran to a loophole in the wall

XX

SILVER'S EMBASSY

SURE ENOUGH there were two men just outside the stockade one of them waving a white cloth the other no less a person than Silver himself standing placidly by

It was still quite early and the coldest morning that I think I ever was abroad in a chill that pierced into the marrow The sky was bright and cloudless overhead and the tops of the trees shone rosily in the sun But where Silver stood with his lieutenant all was still in shadow and they waded knee deep in a low white vapour that had crawled during the night out of

the morass The chill and the vapour taken together told a poor tale of the island It was plainly a damp feverish unhealthy spot

Keep indoors men said the captain Ten to one this is a trick

Then he hailed the buccaneer

Who goes? Stand or we fire

Flag of truce cried Silver

The captain was in the porch keeping himself carefully out of the way of a treacherous shot should any be intended He turned and spoke to us —

Doctor's watch on the look out Dr Livesey take the north side if you please, Jim the east Gray west The watch below all hands to load muskets Lively men and careful

And then he turned again to the mutineers

And what do you want with your flag of truce? he cried

This time it was the other man who replied

Cap'n Silver sir, to come on board and make terms' he shouted

"Cap'n Silver! Don't know him Who's he?" cries the captain And we could hear him adding to himself "Cap'n, is it? My heart and here's promotion!"

Long John answered for himself

Me sir These poor lads have chosen me cap'n after your desertion sir — laying a particular emphasis upon the word desertion We're willing to submit if we can come to terms and no bones about it All I ask is your word Cap'n Smollett to let me safe and sound out of this here stockade and one minute to get out o' shot before a gun is fired

My man' said Captain Smollett 'I have not the slightest desire to talk to you If you wish to talk to me you can come that's all If there's any treachery, it'll be on your side and the Lord help you

That's enough cap'n shouted Long John cheerily A word from you's enough I know a gentleman, and you may lay to that

We could see the man who carried the flag of truce attempting to hold Silver back Nor was that wonderful seeing how cavalier had been the captain's answer But Silver laughed at him aloud and slapped him on the back as if the idea of alarm had been absurd Then he advanced to the stockade threw over his crutch got a leg up and with great vigour and skill succeeded in surmounting the fence and dropping safely to the other side

I will confess that I was far too much taken up with what was going on to be of the slightest use as sentry indeed I had already deserted my eastern loop hole and crept up behind the captain who had now seated himself on the threshold with his elbows on his knees his head in his hands and his eyes fixed on the water as it bubbled out of the old iron kettle in the sand He was whistling to himself, Come Lassies and Lads'

Silver had terrible hard work getting up the knoll What with the steepness of the incline, the thick tree stumps and the soft sand he and his crutch were as helpless as a ship in stays But he stuck to it like a man in silence and at last arrived before the captain whom he saluted in the handsomest style He was tricked out in his best, an immense blue coat thick with brass buttons

hung as low as to his knees and a fine laced hat was set on the back of his head
 Here you are my man said the captain raising his head You had better sit down

You aint a going to let me inside cap n' complained Long John 'It's a main cold morning to be sure sir to sit outside upon the sand

Why Silver said the captain if you had pleased to be an honest man, you might have been sitting in your galley It's your own doing You're either my ship's cook—and then you were treated handsome—or Cap'n Silver a common mutineer and pirate and then you can go hang'

Well well cap'n returned the sea cook sitting down as he was bidden on the sand you'll have to give me a hand up again that's all A sweet pretty place you have of it here Ah there's Jim! The top of the morning to you Jim! Doctor here's my service Why there you all are together like a happy family in a manner of speaking

If you have anything to say my man better say it ' said the captain

'Right you were, Cap'n Smollett replied Silver Dooty is dooty to be sure Well now you look here that was a good lay of yours last night I don't deny it was a good lay Some of you pretty handy with a handspike end And I'll not deny neither but what some of my people was shook—maybe all was shook maybe I was shook myself maybe that's why I'm here for terms But you mark me cap'n it won't do twice by thunder! We'll have to do sentry go and ease off a point or so on the rum Maybe you think we were all a sheet in the wind's eye But I'll tell you I was sober I was on y dog tired and if I'd awoke a second sooner I'd a caught you at the act I would He wasn't dead when I got round to him not he

Well' says Captain Smollett, as cool as can be

All that Silver said was a riddle to him but you would never have guessed it from his tone As for me I began to have an inkling Ben Gunn's last words came back to my mind I began to suppose that he had paid the buccaneers a visit while they all lay drunk together round their fire and I reckoned up with glee that we had only fourteen enemies to deal with

Well here it is said Silver We want that treasure and we'll have it—that's our point! You would just as soon save your lives I reckon, and that's yours You have a chart haven't you'

That's as may be replied the captain

'Oh well you have I know that returned Long John You needn't be so husky with a man there aint a particle of service in that and you may lay to it What I means is, we want your chart Now I never meant you no harm, myself

That won't do with me my man,' interrupted the captain We know exactly what you meant to do and we don't care for now you see, you can't do it

And the captain looked at him calmly and proceeded to fill a pipe

'If Abe Gray— Silver broke out

Avast there! cried Mr Smollett Gray told me nothing, and I asked him nothing, and what's more I would see you and him and this whole island

blown clean out of the water into blazes first So there s my mind for you my man on that'

This little whiff of temper seemed to cool Silver down He had been growing nettled before but now he pulled himself together

Like enough said he 'I would set no limits to what gentlemen might consider shipshape or might not as the case were And seem as how you are about to take a pipe cap n I ll make so free as do likewise

And he filled a pipe and lighted it, and the two men sat silently smoking for quite a while now looking each other in the face now stopping their tobacco now leaning forward to spit It was as good as the play to see them

Now resumed Silver here it is You give us the chart to get the treasure by and drop shooting poor seamen and stoving of their heads in while asleep You do that and we ll offer you a choice Either you come aboard along of us, once the treasure shipped and then I ll give you my affy-davy upon my word of honour, to clap you somewhere safe ashore Or if that aint to your fancy, some of my hands being rough and having old scores on account of hazing then you can stay here you can We ll divide stores with you man for man and I ll give my affy-davy as before to speak the first ship I sight and send 'em here to pick you up Now you ll own that s talking Handsomer you couldn t look to get not you And I hope —raising his voice— that all hands in this here block house will overhaul my words for what is spoke to one is spoke to all'

Captain Smollett rose from his seat, and knocked out the ashes of his pipe in the palm of his left hand

Is that all? he asked

Every last word by thunder! answered John Refuse that and you ve seen the last of me but musketballs

Very good said the captain Now you ll hear me If you ll come up one by one unarmed I ll engage to clap you all in irons and take you home to a fair trial in England If you won t my name is Alexander Smollett I ve flown my sovereign s colours and I ll see you all to Davy Jones You can t find the treasure You can t sail the ship—there s not a man among you fit to sail the ship You can t fight us—Gray there got away from five of you Your ship s in irons Master Silver you re on a lee shore and so you ll find I stand here and tell you so and they re the last good words you ll get from me for in the name of heaven I ll put a bullet in your back when next I meet you Tramp, my lad Bundle out of this please hand over hand and double quick

Silver s face was a picture, his eyes started in his head with wrath He shook the fire out of his pipe

Give me a hand up! he cried

Not I returned the captain

Who ll give me a hand up? he roared

Not a man among us moved Growling the foulest imprecations he crawled along the sand till he got hold of the porch and could hoist himself again upon his crutch Then he spat into the spring

There! he cried that s what I think of ye Before an hour s out I ll stove

in your old block house like a rum puncheon Laugh by thunder laugh'
Before an hour's out yell laugh upon the other side Them that die'll be the
lucky ones

And with a dreadful oath he stumbled off ploughed down the sand was
helped across the stockade after four or five failures by the man with the flag
of truce and disappeared in an instant afterwards among the trees

XXI

THE ATTACK

As soon as Silver disappeared the captain who had been closely watching
him turned towards the interior of the house and found not a man of us at
his post but Gray It was the first time we had ever seen him angry

Quarters' he roared And then as we all slunk back to our places Gray
he said I'll put your name in the log you've stood by your duty like a sea-
man Mr Trelawney I'm surprised at you sir Doctor I thought you had
worn the king's coat' If that was how you served at Fontenoy sir you'd have
been better in your berth

The doctor's watch were all back at their loopholes the rest were busy
'oading the spare muskets and every one with a red face you may be certain,
and a flea in his ear as the saying is

The captain looked on for a while in silence Then he spoke

My lads said he I've given Silver a broadside I pitched it in red-hot on
purpose and before the hour's out as he said we shall be boarded We're out-
numbered I needn't tell you that but we fight in shelter and a minute ago
I should have said we fought with discipline I've no manner of doubt that
we can drub them if you choose

Then he went the rounds and saw as he said that all was clear

On the two short sides of the house east and west there were only two
loopholes on the south side where the porch was two again and on the north
side five There was a round score of muskets for the seven of us the fire-
wood had been built into four piles-tables you might say—one about the
middle of each side and on each of these tables some ammunition and four
loaded muskets were laid ready to the hand of the defenders In the middle
the cutlasses lay ranged

Toss out the fire said the captain the chill is past and we mustn't have
smoke in our eyes

The iron fire basket was carried bodily out by Mr Trelawney and the
embers smothered among sand

Hawkins hasn't had his breakfast Hawkins help yourself and back to your
post to eat it continued Captain Smollett Lively now my lad you'll want
it before you've done Hunter serve out a round of brandy to all hands'

And while this was going on the captain completed in his own mind, the
plan of the defence

'Doctor you will take the door' he resumed. See and don't expose your self, keep within and fire through the porch. Hunter take the east side there Joyce you stand by the west my man Mr Trelawney you are the best shot—you and Gray will take this long north side with the five loopholes it's there the danger is If they can get up to it and fire in upon us through our own ports, things would begin to look dirty Hawkins neither you nor I are much account at the shooting we'll stand by to load and bear a hand

As the captain had said the chill was past As soon as the sun had climbed above our girdle of trees it fell with all its force upon the clearing and drank up the vapours at a draught Soon the sand was baking and the resin melting in the logs of the blockhouse Jackets and coats were flung aside shirts thrown open at the neck and rolled up to the shoulders and we stood there each at his post, in a fever of heat and anxiety

An hour passed away

'Hang them!' said the captain 'This is as dull as the doldrums Gray, whistle for a wind'

And just at that moment came the first news of the attack

'If you please sir' said Joyce 'if I see anyone am I to fire'

I told you so' cried the captain

Thank you sir returned Joyce with the same quiet civility

Nothing followed for a time but the remark had set us all on the alert straining ears and eyes—the musketeers with their pieces balanced in their hands the captain out in the middle of the block house with his mouth very tight and a frown on his face

So some seconds passed till suddenly Joyce whipped up his musket and fired The report had scarcely died away ere it was repeated and repeated from without in a scattering volley shot behind shot like a string of geese from every side of the enclosure Several bullets struck the log house but not one entered and as the smoke cleared away and vanished the stockade and the woods around it looked as quiet and empty as before Not a bough waved not the gleam of a musket barrel betrayed the presence of our foes

'Did you hit your man?' asked the captain

'No sir' replied Joyce 'I believe not sir'

Next best thing to tell the truth muttered Captain Smollett Load his gun Hawkins How many should you say there were on your side doctor?

I know precisely' said Dr Livesey Three shots were fired on this side I saw the three flashes—two close together—one farther to the west

'Three!' repeated the captain And how many on yours Mr Trelawney?

But this was not so easily answered There had come many from the north—seven by the squire's computation eight or nine according to Gray From the east and west only a single shot had been fired It was plain therefore that the attack would be developed from the north and that on the other three sides we were only to be annoyed by a show of hostilities But Captain Smollett made no change in his arrangements If the mutineers succeeded in crossing the stockade he argued they would take possession of any unprotected loop hole and shoot us down like rats in our own stronghold

Nor had we much time left to us for thought Suddenly with a loud huzza a little cloud of pirates leaped from the woods on the north side and ran straight on the stockade At the same moment the fire was once more opened from the woods and a rifle ball sang through the doorway and knocked the doctor's musket into bits

The boarders swarmed over the fence like monkeys Squire and Gray fired again and yet again three men fell one forwards into the enclosure two back on the outside But of these one was evidently more frightened than hurt for he was on his feet again in a crack and instantly disappeared among the trees

Two had bit the dust one had fled four had made good their footing inside our defence while from the shelter of the woods seven or eight men each evidently supplied with several muskets kept up a hot though useless fire on the log house

The four who had boarded made straight before them for the building shouting as they ran and the men among the trees shouted back to encourage them Several shots were fired but such was the hurry of the marksmen that not one appears to have taken effect In a moment the four pirates had swarmed up the mound and were upon us

The head of Job Anderson the boatswain appeared at the middle loophole

At em all hands—all hands! he roared in a voice of thunder

At the same moment another pirate grasped Hunter's musket by the muzzle wrenched it from his hands plucked it through the loophole and with one stunning blow laid the poor fellow senseless on the floor Meanwhile a third running unharmed all round the house appeared suddenly in the doorway and fell with his cutlass on the doctor

Our position was utterly reversed A moment since we were firing under cover at an exposed enemy now it was we who lay uncovered and could not return a blow

The log house was full of smoke to which we owed comparative safety Cries and confusion the flashes and reports of pistol shots and one loud groan rang in my ears

Out, lads out and fight em in the open Cutlasses! cried the captain

I snatched a cutlass from the pile and someone at the same time snatching another gave me a cut across the knuckles which I hardly felt I dashed out of the door into the clear sunlight Someone was close behind I know not whom Right in front the doctor was pursuing his assailant down the hill and, just as my eyes fell upon him beat down his guard and sent his sprawling on his back with a great slash across the face

Round the house lads! round the house! cried the captain and even in the hurly burly I perceived a change in his voice

Mechanically I obeyed turned eastwards and with my cutlass raised ran round the corner of the house Next moment I was face to face with Anderson He roared aloud and his hanger went up above his head flashing in the sunlight I had not time to be afraid but, as the blow still hung impending leaped in a trice upon one side and missing my foot in the soft sand rolled headlong down the slope

When I had first sallied from the door the other mutineers had been already swarming up the palisade to make an end of us One man in a red night cap with his cutlass in his mouth had even got upon the top and thrown a leg across Well, so short had been the interval that when I found my feet again all was in the same posture the fellow with the red night cap still half way over, another still just showing his head above the top of the stockade And yet, in this breath of time the fight was over and the victory was ours

Gray following close behind me had cut down the big boatswain ere he had time to recover from his last blow Another had been shot at a loophole in the very act of firing into the house and now lay in agony, the pistol still smoking in his hand A third as I had seen the doctor had disposed of at a blow Of the four who had scaled the palisade one only remained unaccounted for and he having left his cutlass on the field was now clambering out again with the fear of death upon him

‘Fire—fire from the house!’ cried the doctor And you lads, back into cover’

But his words were unheeded no shot was fired, and the last boarder made good his escape and disappeared with the rest into the wood In three seconds nothing remained of the attacking party but the five who had fallen four on the inside and one on the outside of the palisade

The doctor and Gray and I ran full speed for shelter The survivors would soon be back where they had left their muskets and at any moment the fire might recommence

The house was by this time somewhat cleared of smoke and we saw at a glance the price we had paid for victory Hunter lay beside his loophole stunned Joyce by his shot through the head never to move again while right in the centre the squire was supporting the captain one as pale as the other

The captain’s wounded said Mr Trelawney

Have they run?’ asked Mr Smollett

All that could you may be bound, returned the doctor, ‘but there’s five of them will never run again

‘Five!’ cried the captain ‘Come that’s better Five against three leaves us four to nine That’s better odds than we had at starting We were seven to nineteen then or thought we were and that’s as bad to bear *

*The mutineers were soon only eight in number for the man shot by Mr Trelawney on board the schooner died that same evening of his wound But this was of course not known till after by the faithful party

PART V
MY SEA ADVENTURE

XXII

How I BEGAN MY SEA ADVENTURE

THERE was no return of the mutineers—not so much as another shot out of the woods They had got their rations for that day as the captain put it and we had the place to ourselves and a quiet time to overhaul the wounded and get dinner Squire and I cooked outside in spite of the danger and even outside we could hardly tell what we were at for horror of the loud groans that reached us from the doctor's patients

Out of the eight men who had fallen in the action only three still breathed—that one of the pirates who had been shot at the loophole Hunter and Captain Smollett and of these the first two were as good as dead, the mutineer indeed died under the doctor's knife and Hunter do what we could never recovered consciousness in this world He lingered all day breathing loudly like the old buccaneer at home in his apoplectic fit but the bones of his chest had been crushed by the blow and his skull fractured in falling and some time in the following night without sign or sound he went to his Maker

As for the captain his wounds were grievous indeed but not dangerous No organ was fatally injured Anderson's ball—for it was Job that shot him first—had broken his shoulder-blade and touched the lung not badly, the second had only torn and displaced some muscles in the calf He was sure to recover, the doctor said but in the meantime and for weeks to come he must not walk nor move his arm nor so much as speak when he could help it

My own accidental cut across the knuckles was a flea bite Dr Livesey patched it up with plaster and pulled my ears for me into the bargain.

After dinner the squire and the doctor sat by the captain's side a while in consultation and when they had talked to their heart's content it being then a little past noon the doctor took up his hat and pistols girt on his cutlass put the chart in his pocket and with a musket on his shoulder crossed the palisade on the north side and set off briskly through the trees

Gray and I were sitting together at the far end of the block house to be out of earshot of our officers consulting and Gray took his pipe out of his mouth and fairly forgot to put it back again so thunderstruck he was at this occurrence

Why in the name of Davy Jones said he is Dr Livesey mad?

Why, no says I He's about the last of this crew for that I take it?

Well shipmate' said Gray mad he may not be, but if he's not you mark my words I am

'I take it replied I the doctor has his idea and if I am right he's going now to see Ben Gunn

I was right as appeared later but in the meantime the house being stifling hot, and the little patch of sand inside the palisade ablaze with midday sun, I began to get another thought into my head which was not by any means so right What I began to do was to envy the doctor walking in the cool shadow of the woods, with the birds about him and the pleasant smell of the pines while I sat grilling, with my clothes stuck to the hot resin and so much blood about me and so many poor dead bodies lying all around, that I took a disgust of the place that was almost as strong as fear

All the time I was washing out the block house and then washing up the things from dinner this disgust and envy kept growing stronger and stronger, till at last being near a bread bag and no one then observing me, I took the first step towards my escapade and filled both pockets of my coat with biscuit

I was a fool if you like, and certainly I was going to do a foolish over bold act but I was determined to do it with all the precautions in my power These biscuits should anything befall me, would keep me at least from starving till far on in the next day

The next thing I laid hold of was a brace of pistols and as I already had a powder horn and bullets I felt myself well supplied with arms

As for the scheme I had in my head, it was not a bad one in itself I was to go down the sandy spit that divides the anchorage on the east from the open sea find the white rock I had observed last evening and ascertain whether it was there or not that Ben Gunn had hidden his boat a thing quite worth doing as I still believe But as I was certain I should not be allowed to leave the enclosure my only plan was to take French leave and slip out when nobody was watching and that was so bad a way of doing it as made the thing itself wrong But I was only a boy and I had made my mind up

Well, as things at last fell out I found an admirable opportunity The squire and Gray were busy helping the captain with his bandages the coast was clear, I made a bolt for it over the stockade and into the thicket of the trees and before my absence was observed I was out of cry of my companions

This was my second folly far worse than the first as I left but two sound men to guard the house but like the first it was a help towards saving all of us

I took my way straight for the east coast of the island for I was determined to go down the sea side of the spit to avoid all chance of observation from the anchorage It was already late in the afternoon although still warm and sunny As I continued to thread the tall woods I could hear from far before me not only the continuous thunder of the surf but a certain tossing of foliage and grinding of boughs which showed me the sea breeze had set in higher than usual Soon cool draughts of air began to reach me and a few steps farther I came forth into the open borders of the grove and saw the sea lying blue and sunny to the horizon, and the surf tumbling and tossing its foam along the beach

I have never seen the sea quiet round Treasure Island The sun might blaze overhead, the air be without a breath, the surface smooth and blue but still

these great rollers would be running along all the external coast thundering and thundering by day and night and I scarce believe there is one spot in the island where a man would be out of earshot of their noise

I walked along beside the surf with great enjoyment till thinking I was now got far enough to the south I took the cover of some thick bushes and crept warily up to the ridge of the spit

Behind me was the sea in front the anchorage The sea breeze as though it had the sooner blow itself out by its unusual violence was already at an end it had been succeeded by light variable airs from the south and south-east carrying great banks of fog and the anchorage under lee of Skeleton Island lay still and leaden as when first we entered it The *Hispaniola*, in that unbroken mirror was exactly portrayed from the truck to the water line the Jolly Roger hanging from her peak

Alongside lay one of the gigs Silver in the sternsheets—him I could always recognise—while a couple of men were leaning over the stern bulwarks one of them with a red cap—the very rogue that I had seen some hours before stridely upon the palisade Apparently they were talking and laughing though at that distance—upwards of a mile—I could of course hear no word of what was said All at once, there began the most horrid unearthly screaming which at first startled me badly though I soon remembered the voice of Captain Flint and even thought I could make out the bird by her bright plumage as she sat perched upon her master's wrist

Soon after the jolly boat shoved off and pulled for shore and the man with the red cap and his comrades went below by the cabin companion.

Just about the same time the sun had gone down behind the Spy glass and as the fog was collecting rapidly it began to grow dark in earnest I saw I must lose no time if I were to find the boat that evening

The white rock visible enough above the brush was still some eighth of a mile further down the spit, and it took me a goodish while to get up with it crawling often on all fours among the scrub Night had almost come when I laid my hand on its rough sides Right below it there was an exceedingly small hollow of green turf hidden by banks and a thick underwood about knee deep that grew there very plentifully and in the centre of the dell sure enough a little tent of goatskins like what the gipsies carry about with them in England

I dropped into the hollow lifted the side of the tent and there was Ben Gunn's boat—home made if ever anything was home made a rude lopsided framework of tough wood and stretched upon that a covering of goatskin with the hair inside The thing was extremely small even for me and I can hardly imagine that it could have floated with a full-sized man There was one thwart set as low as possible a kind of stretcher in the bows, and a double paddle for propulsion

I had not then seen a coracle such as the ancient Britons made but I have seen one since and I can give you no fairer idea of Ben Gunn's boat than by saying it was like the first and the worst coracle ever made by man But the great advantage of the coracle it certainly possessed, for it was exceedingly light and portable.

Well now that I had found the boat you would have thought I had had enough of truancy for once but in the meantime I had taken another notion, and became so obstinately fond of it that I would have carried it out I believe, in the teeth of Captain Smollett himself This was to slip out under cover of the night cut the *Hispaniola* adrift and let her go ashore where she fancied. I had quite made up my mind that the mutineers after their repulse of the morning had nothing nearer their hearts than to up anchor and away to sea this I thought, it would be a fine thing to prevent and now that I had seen how they left their watchmen unprovided with a boat I thought it might be done with little risk

Down I sat to wait for darkness and made a hearty meal of biscuit It was a night out of ten thousand for my purpose The fog had now buried all heaven As the last rays of daylight dwindled and disappeared absolute blackness settled down on Treasure Island And when at last I shouldered the coracle and groped my way stumblingly out of the hollow where I had supped there were but two points visible on the whole anchorage

One was the great fire on shore by which the defeated pirates lay carousing in the swamp The other a mere blur of light upon the darkness indicated the position of the anchored ship She had swung round to the ebb—her bow was now towards me—the only lights on board were in the cabin and what I saw was merely a reflection on the fog of the strong rays that flowed from the stern window

The ebb had already run some time and I had to wade through a long belt of swampy sand where I sank several times above the ankle before I came to the edge of the retreating water wading a little way in with some strength and dexterity set my coracle keel downwards on the surface

XXIII

THE EBB TIDE RUNS

THE CORACLE—as I had ample reason to know before I was done with her—was a very safe boat for a person of my height and weight both buoyant and clever in a seaway but she was the most cross grained lop sided craft to manage Do as you please she always made more leeway than anything else and turning round and round was the manoeuvre she was best at Even Ben Gunn himself has admitted that she was queer to handle till you knew her way

Certainly I did not know her way She turned in every direction but the one I was bound to go the most part of the time we were broadside on and I am very sure I never should have made the ship at all but for the tide By good fortune paddle as I pleased, the tide was still sweeping me down, and there lay the *Hispaniola* right in the fair way hardly to be missed

First she loomed before me like a blot of something yet blacker than darkness, then her spars and hull began to take shape, and the next moment, as it seemed

(for the further I went the brisker grew the current of the ebb), I was along side of her hawser and had laid hold

The hawser was as taut as a bowstring—so strong she pulled upon her anchor All round the hull in the blackness the rippling current bubbled and chattered like a little mountain stream One cut with my sea gully, and the *Hispaniola* would go humming down the tide

So far so good but it next occurred to my recollection that a taut hawser suddenly cut is a thing as dangerous as a kicking horse Ten to one if I were so foolhardy as to cut the *Hispaniola* from her anchor I and the coracle would be knocked clean out of the water

This brought me to a full stop and if fortune had not again particularly favoured me I should have had to abandon my design But the light airs which had begun blowing from the south east and south had hauled round after night fall into the south west Just while I was meditating a puff came caught the *Hispaniola*, and forced her up into the current and to my great joy I felt the hawser slacken in my grasp and the hand by which I held it dip for a second under water

With that I made my mind up took out my gully opened it with my teeth, and cut one strand after another till the vessel only swung by two Then I lay quiet waiting to sever these last when the strain should be once more lightened by a breath of wind

All this time I had heard the sound of loud voices from the cabin but, to say truth my mind had been so entirely taken up with other thoughts that I had scarcely given ear Now however when I had nothing else to do, I began to pay more heed

One I recognised for the coxswain's Israel Hands, that had been Flint's gunner in former days The other was of course, my friend of the red night-cap Both men were plainly the worse for drink and they were still drinking for even while I was listening one of them with a drunken cry opened the stern window and threw out something which I divined to be an empty bottle But they were not only tipsy it was plain that they were furiously angry Oaths flew like hailstones and every now and then there came forth such an explosion as I thought was sure to end in blows But each time the quarrel passed off and the voices grumbled lower for a while until the next crisis came and in its turn passed away without result

On shore I could see the glow of the great camp fire burning warmly through the shoreside trees Someone was singing a dull old droning sailor's song with a droop and a quaver at the end of every verse and seemingly no end to it at all but the patience of the singer I had heard it on the voyage more than once, and remembered these words—

*“But one man of her crew alive,
What put to sea with seventy five”*

And I thought it was a ditty rather too dolefully appropriate for a company that had met such cruel losses in the morning But indeed from what I saw all these buccaneers were as callous as the sea they sailed on

At last the breeze came the schooner sidled and drew nearer in the dark I felt the hawser slacken once more, and with a good tough effort cut the last fibres through

The breeze had but little action on the coracle and I was almost instantly swept against the bows of the *Hispaniola* At the same time the schooner began to turn upon her heel spinning slowly, end for end across the current

I wrought like a fiend for I expected every moment to be swamped and since I found I could not push the coracle directly off I now shoved straight astern At length I was clear of my dangerous neighbour and just as I gave the last impulsion, my hands came across a light cord that was trailing over board across the stern bulwarks Instantly I grasped it

Why I should have done so I can hardly say It was at first mere instinct but once I had it in my hands and found it fast, curiosity began to get the upper hand and I determined I should have one look through the cabin window

I pulled in hand over hand on the cord and when I judged myself near enough rose at infinite risk to about half my height, and thus commanded the roof and a slice of the interior of the cabin

By this time the schooner and her little consort were gliding pretty swiftly through the water indeed, we had already fetched up level with the camp fire The ship was talking as sailors say loudly treading the innumerable ripples with an incessant weltering splash, and until I got my eye above the window sill I could not comprehend why the watchmen had taken no alarm One glance, however was sufficient and it was only one glance that I durst take from the unsteady skiff It showed me Hands and his companion locked together in deadly wrestle each with a hand upon the other's throat

I dropped upon the thwart again none too soon, for I was near overboard I could see nothing for the moment but these two furious encrimsoned faces swaying together under the smoky lamp, and I shut my eyes to let them grow once more familiar with the darkness

The endless ballad had come to an end at last and the whole diminished company about the camp fire had broken into the chorus I had heard so often -

*"Fifteen men on The Dead Man's Chest—
Yo ho ho, and a bottle of rum'
Drink and the devil had done for the rest—
Yo ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!"*

I was just thinking how busy drink and the devil were at that very moment in the cabin of the *Hispaniola*, when I was surprised by a sudden lurch of the coracle At the same moment she yawed sharply and seemed to change her course The speed in the meantime had greatly increased

I opened my eyes at once All round me were little ripples combing over with a sharp, bristling sound and slightly phosphorescent The *Hispaniola* herself, a few yards in whose wake I was still being whirled along seemed to stagger in her course, and I saw her spars toss a little against the blackness of

the night, nay, as I looked longer, I made sure she also was wheeling to the southward

I glanced over my shoulder, and my heart jumped against my ribs There right behind me was the glow of the camp fire The current had turned at right angles sweeping round along with it the tall schooner and the little dancing coracle ever quickening, ever bubbling higher ever muttering louder, it went spinning through the narrows for the open sea

Suddenly the schooner in front of me gave a violent yaw, turning perhaps through twenty degrees and almost at the same moment one shout followed another from on board I could hear feet pounding on the companion ladder and I knew that the two drunkards had at last been interrupted in their quarrel and awakened to a sense of their disaster

I lay down flat in the bottom of that wretched skiff and devoutly recommended my spirit to its Maker At the end of the straits, I made sure we must fall into some bar of raging breakers where all my troubles would be ended speedily and though I could perhaps, bear to die, I could not bear to look upon my fate as it approached

So I must have lain for hours continually beaten to and fro upon the billows now and again wetted with flying sprays and never ceasing to expect death at the next plunge Gradually weariness grew upon me a numbness, an occasional stupor fell upon my mind even in the midst of my terrors, until sleep at last supervened and in my sea tossed coracle I lay and dreamed of home and the old Admiral Benbow

XXIV

THE CRUISE OF THE CORACLE

IT WAS broad day when I awoke and found myself tossing at the south-west end of Treasure Island The sun was up but was still hid from me behind the great bulk of the Spy-glass, which on this side descended almost to the sea in formidable cliffs

Haulbowline Head and Mizzen mast Hill were at my elbow the hill bare and dark the head bound with cliffs forty or fifty feet high and fringed with great masses of fallen rock I was scarce a quarter of a mile to seaward and it was my first thought to paddle in and land

That notion was soon given over Among the fallen rocks the breakers spouted and bellowed, loud reverberations heavy sprays flying and falling succeeded one another from second to second, and I saw myself if I ventured nearer dashed to death upon the rough shore or spending my strength in vain to scale the beetling crags

Nor was that all for crawling together on flat tables of rock or letting themselves drop into the sea with loud reports I beheld huge slimy monsters—soft snails as it were of incredible bigness—two or three score of them together, making the rocks to echo with their barkings

I have understood since that they were sea lions and entirely harmless But

the look of them added to the difficulty of the shore and the high running of the surf, was more than enough to disgust me of that landing place I felt willing rather to starve at sea than to confront such perils

In the meantime I had a better chance as I supposed before me North of Haulbowline Head, the land runs in a long way leaving at low tide a long stretch of yellow sand To the north of that again there comes another cape—Cape of the Woods, as it was marked upon the chart—buried in tall green pines, which descended to the margin of the sea

I remembered what Silver had said about the current that sets northward along the whole west coast of Treasure Island and seeing from my position that I was already under its influence I preferred to leave Haulbowline Head behind me, and reserve my strength for an attempt to land upon the kindlier looking Cape of the Woods

There was a great, smooth swell upon the sea The wind blowing steady and gentle from the south there was no contrariety between that and the current and the billows rose and fell unbroken

Had it been otherwise I must long ago have perished but as it was it is surprising how easily and securely my little and light boat could ride Often, as I still lay at the bottom and kept no more than an eye above the gunwale, I would see a big blue summit heaving close above me yet the coracle would but bounce a little dance as if on springs and subside on the other side into the trough as lightly as a bird

I began after a little to grow very bold and sat up to try my skill at paddling But even a small change in the disposition of the weight will produce violent changes in the behaviour of a coracle And I had hardly moved before the boat giving up at once her gentle dancing movement ran straight down a slope of water so steep that it made me giddy and struck her nose with a spout of spray deep into the side of the next wave

I was drenched and terrified and fell instantly back into my old position, whereupon the coracle seemed to find her head again and led me as softly as before among the billows It was plain she was not to be interfered with and at that rate since I could in no way influence her course what hope had I left of reaching land?

I began to be horribly frightened but I kept my head for all that First, moving with all care I gradually baled out the coracle with my sea cap, then getting my eye once more above the gunwale I set myself to study how it was she managed to slip so quietly through the rollers

I found each wave instead of the big, smooth glossy mountain it looks from shore or from a vessel's deck was for all the world like any range of hills on the dry land full of peaks and smooth places and valleys The coracle left to herself turning from side to side threaded so to speak her way through these lower parts and avoided the steep slopes and higher, toppling summits of the wave

Well now thought I to myself 'it is plain I must lie where I am and not disturb the balance but it is plain, also that I can put the paddle over the side and from time to time in smooth places give her a shove or two towards

land No sooner thought upon than done There I lay on my elbows in the most trying attitude and every now and again gave a weak stroke or two to turn her head to shore

It was very tiring and slow work yet I did visibly gain ground and as we drew near the Cape of the Woods though I saw I must infallibly miss that point I had still made some hundred yards of easting I was indeed close in I could see the cool green tree tops swaying together in the breeze and I felt sure I should make the next promontory without fail

It was high time for I now began to be tortured with thirst The glow of the sun from above its thousand fold reflection from the waves the sea water that fell and dried upon me caking my very lips with salt combined to make my throat burn and my brain ache The sight of the trees so near at hand had almost made me sick with longing but the current had soon carried me past the point, and as the next reach of sea opened out I beheld a sight that changed the nature of my thoughts

Right in front of me not half a mile away I beheld the *Hispaniola* under sail I made sure of course that I should be taken but I was so distressed for want of water that I scarce knew whether to be glad or sorry at the thought, and long before I had come to a conclusion surprise had taken entire possession of my mind and I could do nothing but stare and wonder

The *Hispaniola* was under her main sail and two jibs and the beautiful white canvas shone in the sun like snow or silver When I first sighted her, all her sails were drawing she was lying a course about north west and I presumed the men on board were going round the island on their way back to the anchorage Presently she began to fetch more and more to the westward, so that I thought they had sighted me and were going about in chase At last, however she fell right into the wind's eye was taken dead aback, and stood there a while helpless with her sails shivering

Clumsy fellows said I they must still be drunk as owls' And I thought how Captain Smollett would have set them skipping

Meanwhile the schooner gradually fell off and filled again upon another tack sailed swiftly for a minute or so and brought up once more dead in the wind's eye Again and again was this repeated To and fro up and down, north south east and west the *Hispaniola* sailed by swoops and dashes and at each repetition ended as she had begun with idly flapping canvas It became plain to me that nobody was steering And if so where were the men? Either they were dead drunk or had deserted her I thought and perhaps if I could get on board I might return the vessel to her captain

The current was bearing coracle and schooner southward at an equal rate As for the latter's sailing it was so wild and intermittent and she hung each time so long in irons that she certainly gained nothing if she did not even lose If only I dared to sit up and paddle I made sure that I could overhaul her The scheme had an air of adventure that inspired me and the thought of the water breaker beside the fore companion doubled my growing courage

Up I got was welcomed almost instantly by another cloud of spray but this time stuck to my purpose and set myself, with all my strength and caution,

to paddle after the unsteered *Hispaniola* Once I shipped a sea so heavy that I had to stop and bale with my heart fluttering like a bird but gradually I got into the way of the thing and guided my coracle among the waves with only now and then a blow upon her bows and a dash of foam in my face

I was now gaining rapidly on the schooner I could see the brass glisten on the tiller as it banged about and still no soul appeared upon her decks I could not choose but suppose she was deserted If not the men were lying drunk below where I might batten them down perhaps and do what I chose with the ship

For some time she had been doing the worst thing possible for me—standing still She headed nearly due south yawning of course all the time Each time she fell off her sails partly filled and these brought her in a moment right to the wind again I have said this was the worst thing possible for me for helpless as she looked in this situation with the canvas cracking like cannon and the blocks trundling and banging on the deck she still continued to run away from me not only with the speed of the current but by the whole amount of her leeway which was naturally great

But now at last I had my chance The breeze fell for some seconds very low and the current gradually turning her the *Hispaniola* revolved slowly round her centre and at last presented me her stern with the cabin window still gaping open and the lamp over the table still burning on into the day The main sail hung drooped like a banner She was stock still but for the current

For the last little while I had even lost but now redoubling my efforts I began once more to overhaul the chase

I was not a hundred yards from her when the wind came again in a clap she filled on the port tack and was off again stooping and skimming like a swallow

My first impulse was one of despair but my second was towards joy Round she came till she was broadside on to me—round still till she had covered a half and then two thirds and then three-quarters of the distance that separated us I could see the waves boiling white under her forefoot Immensely tall she looked to me from my low station in the coracle

And then, of a sudden, I began to comprehend I had scarce time to think—scarce time to act and save myself I was on the summit of one swell when the schooner came swooping over the next The bowsprit was over my head I sprang to my feet and leaped stamping the coracle under water With one hand I caught the jib-boom while my foot was lodged between the stay and the brace and as I still clung there panting a dull blow told me that the schooner had charged down upon and struck the coracle, and that I was left without retreat on the *Hispaniola*

XXV

I STRIKE THE JOLLY ROGER

I HAD SCARCE GAINED a position on the bow sprit when the flying jib flapped and filled upon the other tack with a report like a gun The schooner trembled

to her keel under the reverse but next moment, the other sails still drawing the jib flapped back again and hung idle

This had nearly tossed me off into the sea and now I lost no time, crawled back along the bow sprit and tumbled headforemost on the deck

I was on the lee side of the forecastle and the main-sail which was still drawing concealed from me a certain portion of the after deck. Not a soul was to be seen. The planks which had not been swabbed since the mutiny bore the print of many feet, and an empty bottle, broken by the neck tumbled to and fro like a live thing in the scuppers.

Suddenly the *Hispaniola* came right into the wind. The jibs behind me cracked aloud the rudder slammed to the whole ship gave a sickening heave and shudder and at the same moment the main boom swung inboard the sheet groaning in the blocks and showed me the lee after deck

There were the two watchmen sure enough red cap on his back as stiff as a handspike with his arms stretched out like those of a crucifix, and his teeth showing through his open lips Israel Hands propped against the bulwarks his chin on his chest his hands lying open before him on the deck his face as white under its tan as a tallow candle

For a while the ship kept bucking and sidling like a vicious horse the sails filling now on one tack now on another and the boom swinging to and fro till the mast groaned aloud under the strain. Now and again too there would come a cloud of light sprays over the bulwark and a heavy blow of the ship's bows against the swell so much heavier weather was made of it by this great rigged ship than by my home made lopsided coracle, now gone to the bottom of the sea

At every jump of the schooner red-cap slipped to and fro but—what was ghastly to behold—neither his attitude nor his fixed teeth-disclosing grin was anyway disturbed by this rough usage. At every jump too Hands appeared still more to sink into himself and settle down upon the deck, his feet sliding ever the farther out and the whole body canting towards the stern so that his face became little by little hid from me, and at last I could see nothing beyond his ear and the frayed ringlet of one whisker

And at the same time I observed around both of them splashes of dark blood upon the planks and began to feel sure that they had killed each other in their drunken wrath

While I was thus looking and wondering in a calm moment when the ship was still Israel Hands turned partly round and with a low moan writhed himself back to the position in which I had seen him first. The moan which told of pain and deadly weakness and the way in which his jaw hung open went right to my heart. But when I remembered the talk I had overheard from the apple barrel all pity left me

I walked aft until I reached the main mast

'Come aboard Mr Hands, I said ironically

He rolled his eyes round heavily but he was too far gone to express surprise All he could do was to utter one word Brandy

It occurred to me there was no time to lose and dodging the boom as it

once more lurched across the deck I slipped aft and down the companion stairs into the cabin

It was such a scene of confusion as you can hardly fancy All the lock fast places had been broken open in quest of the chart The floor was thick with mud where ruffians had sat down to drink or consult after wading in the marshes round their camp The bulkheads all painted in clear white and beaded round with gilt bore a pattern of dirty hands Dozens of empty bottles clinked together in corners to the rolling of the ship One of the doctors medical books lay open on the table, half of the leaves gutted out I suppose for pipelights In the midst of all this the lamp still cast a smoky glow, obscure and brown as umber

I went into the cellar all the barrels were gone and of the bottles a most surprising number had been drunk out and thrown away Certainly, since the mutiny began not a man of them could ever have been sober

Foraging about, I found a bottle with some brandy left for Hands, and for myself I routed out some biscuit some pickled fruits a great bunch of raisins and a piece of cheese With these I came on deck put down my own stock behind the rudder head, and well out of the coxswain's reach went forward to the water breaker and had a good, deep drink of water and then and not till then, gave Hands the brandy

He must have drunk a gill before he took the bottle from his mouth

'Aye said he by thunder but I wanted some o' that'

I had sat down already in my own corner and begun to eat

Much hurt? I asked him

He grunted or rather I might say he barked

'If that doctor was aboard' he said I'd be right enough in a couple of turns but I don't have no manner of luck you see and that's what's the matter with me As for that swab he's good as dead he is he added indicating the man with the red cap He warn't no seaman, anyhow And where mought you have come from?

'Well,' said I I've come aboard to take possession of this ship Mr Hands and you'll please regard me as your captain until further notice

He looked at me sourly enough but said nothing Some of the colour had come back into his cheeks though he still looked very sick and still continued to slip out and settle down as the ship banged about

By the bye I continued I can't have these colours Mr Hands, and by your leave I'll strike em Better none than these

And again dodging the boom I ran to the colour lines handed down their cursed black flag and chucked it overboard

'God save the king!' said I, waving my cap and there's an end to Captain Silver'

He watched me keenly and slyly his chin all the while on his breast

I reckon he said at last— I reckon Cap'n Hawkins you'll kind of want to get ashore now Spose we talks

'Why yes said I with all my heart, Mr Hands Say on ' And I went back to my meal with a good appetite

‘This man’ he began nodding feebly at the corpse—‘O Brien were his name—a rank Irishman—this man and me got the canvas on her meaning for to sail her back Well he’s dead now, he is—as dead as bilge, and who’s to sail this ship I don’t see Without I gives you a hint you ain’t that man as far’s I can tell Now look here you give me food and drink and a old scarf or ankecher to tie my wound up you do, and I’ll tell you how to sail her, and that’s about square all round I take it

I’ll tell you one thing” says I ‘I’m not going back to Captain Kidd’s anchorage I mean to get into North Inlet, and beach her quietly there’

To be sure you did’ he cried ‘Why, I ain’t sich an infernal lubber, after all I can see can’t I? I’ve tried my fling I have, and I’ve lost and it’s you has the wind of me North Inlet’ Why I haven’t no choice, not I! I’d help you sail her up to Excursion Dock by thunder! so I would

Well, as it seemed to me there was some sense in this We struck our bargain on the spot In three minutes I had the *Hispaniola* sailing easily before the wind along the coast of Treasure Island with good hopes of turning the northern point ere noon, and beating down again as far as North Inlet before high water when we might beach her safely and wait till the subsiding tide permitted us to land

Then I lashed the tiller and went below to my own chest, where I got a soft silk handkerchief of my mother’s With this and with my aid Hands bound up the great bleeding stab he had received in the thigh, and after he had eaten a little and had a swallow or two more of the brandy, he began to pick up visibly, sat straighter up, spoke louder and clearer, and looked in every way another man

The breeze served us admirably We skimmed before it like a bird, the coast of the island flashing by and the view changing every minute Soon we were past the high lands and bowling beside low sandy country sparsely dotted with dwarf pines and soon we were beyond that again and had turned the corner of the rocky hill that ends the island on the north

I was greatly elated with my new command and pleased with the right, sunshiny weather and these different prospects of the coast I had now plenty of water and good things to eat and my conscience which had smitten me hard for my desertion was quieted by the great conquest I had made I should I think, have had nothing left me to desire but for the eyes of the coxswain as they followed me derisively about the deck, and the odd smile that appeared continually on his face It was a smile that had in it something both of pain and weakness—a haggard old man’s smile but there was besides that, a grain of derision, a shadow of treachery in his expression as he craftily watched, and watched, and watched me at my work

XXVI

ISRAEL HANDS

THE WIND, serving us to a desire now hauled into the west We could run so much the easier from the north east corner of the island to the mouth of the North Inlet Only as we had no power to anchor and dared not beach her till the tide had flowed a good deal time hung on our hands The coxswain told me how to lay the ship to after a good many trials I succeeded, and we both sat in silence over another meal

Cap'n said he at length with that same uncomfortable smile 'here's my old shipmate O'Brien's pose you was to heave him overboard I ain't particular as a rule and I don't take no blame for settling his hash but I don't reckon him ornamental, now do you'

I'm not strong enough, and I don't like the job and there he lies, for me,' said I

This here's an unlucky ship—this *Hispaniola*, Jim he went on blinking 'There's a power of men been killed in this *Hispaniola*—a sight o' poor seamen dead and gone since you and me took ship to Bristol I never seen sich dirty luck, not I There was this here O'Brien, now—he's dead, ain't he? Well now, I'm no scholar, and you're a lad as can read and figure and to put it straight, do you take it as a dead man is dead for good or do he come alive again?

You can kill the body Mr Hands but not the spirit you must know that already, I replied 'O'Brien there is in another world, and maybe watching us'

'Ah' says he 'Well that's unfort'nate—appears as if killing parties was a waste of time Howsoever sperrits don't reckon for much by what I've seen. I'll chance it with the sperrits Jim And now you've spoke up free and I'll take it kind if you'd step down into that there cabin and get me a well, a-shiver my timbers! I can't hit the name on t well you get me a bottle of wine, Jim—this here brandy's too strong for my head

Now the coxswain's hesitation seemed to be unnatural and as for the notion of his preferring wine to brandy I entirely disbelieved it The whole story was a pretext He wanted me to leave the deck—so much was plain but with what purpose I could in no way imagine His eyes never met mine they kept wandering to and fro up and down now with a look to the sky now with a flitting glance upon the dead O'Brien All the time he kept smiling and putting his tongue out in the most guilty embarrassed manner so that a child could have told that he was bent on some deception I was prompt with my answer how ever for I saw where my advantage lay and that with a fellow so densely stupid I could easily conceal my suspicions to the end

Some wine? I said Far better Will you have white or red?

Well I reckon it's about the blessed same to me shipmate' he replied, "so it's strong and plenty of it, what's the odds?"

'All right' I answered 'I'll bring you port, Mr Hands But I'll have to dig for it'

With that I scuttled down the companion with all the noise I could slipped off my shoes ran quietly along the sparr'd gallery mounted the forecastle ladder and popped my head out of the fore companion I knew he would not expect to see me there yet I took every precaution possible, and certainly the worst of my suspicions proved too true

He had risen from his position to his hands and knees, and though his leg obviously hurt him pretty sharply when he moved—for I could hear him stifle a groan—yet it was at a good rattling rate that he trailed himself across the deck In half a minute he had reached the port scuppers and picked out of a coil of rope a long knife or rather a short dirk, discoloured to the hilt with blood He looked upon it for a moment thrusting forth his under jaw tried the point upon his hand and then hastily concealing it in the bosom of his jacket trundled back again into his old place against the bulwark

This was all I required to know Israel could move about he was now armed and if he had been at so much trouble to get rid of me it was plain that I was meant to be the victim What he would do afterwards—whether he would try to crawl right across the island from North Inlet to the camp among the swamps or whether he would fire Long Tom trusting that his own comrades might come first to help him was of course more than I could say

Yet I felt sure that I could trust him in one point since in that our interests jumped together and that was in the disposition of the schooner We both desired to have her stranded safe enough in a sheltered place and so that when the time came she could be got off again with as little labour and danger as might be, and until that was done I considered that my life would certainly be spared

While I was thus turning the business over in my mind I had not been idle with my body I had stolen back to the cabin slipped once more into my shoes and laid my hand at random on a bottle of wine and now with this for an excuse I made my re appearance on the deck

Hands lay as I had left him, all fallen together in a bundle and with his eyelids lowered, as though he were too weak to bear the light He looked up however at my coming knocked the neck off the bottle like a man who had done the same thing often and took a good swig, with his favourite toast of 'Here's luck!' Then he lay quiet for a little and then pulling out a stick of tobacco begged me to cut him a quid

'Cut me a junk o that says he, for I haven't no knife and hardly strength enough so be as I had Ah Jim Jim I reckon I've missed stays! Cut me a quid, as 'll likely be the last lad for I'm for my long home and no mistake'

'Well,' said I 'I'll cut you some tobacco, but if I was you and thought myself so badly I would go to my prayers like a Christian man.'

'Why?' said he 'Now you tell me why'

'Why?' I cried 'You were asking me just now about the dead You've broken your trust, you've lived in sin and lies and blood there's a man you

killed lying at your feet this moment, and you ask me why! For God's mercy, Mr Hands that's why

I spoke with a little heat thinking of the bloody dirk he had hidden in his pocket and designed in his ill thoughts to end me with He for his part took a great draught of the wine and spoke with the most unusual solemnity

For thirty years he said I've sailed the seas and seen good and bad better and worse fair weather and foul provisions running out knives going and what not Well, now I tell you I never seen good come o' goodness yet Him as strikes first is my fancy dead men don't bite them's my views—amen so be it And now, you look here he added suddenly changing his tone we've had about enough of this foolery The tide's made good enough by now You just take my orders Cap'n Hawkins and we'll sail slap in and be done with it'

All told we had scarce two miles to run, but the navigation was delicate the entrance to this northern anchorage was not only narrow and shoal but lay east and west so that the schooner must be nicely handled to be got in I think I was a good prompt subaltern and I am very sure that Hands was an excellent pilot for we went about and about and dodged in shaving the banks with a certainty and a neatness that were a pleasure to behold

Scarcely had we passed the heads before the land closed around us The shores of North Inlet were as thickly wooded as those of the southern anchorage but the space was longer and narrower and more like what in truth it was the estuary of a river Right before us at the southern end we saw the wreck of a ship in the last stages of dilapidation It had been a great vessel of three masts but had lain so long exposed to the injuries of the weather that it was hung about with great webs of dripping seaweed and on the deck of it shore bushes had taken root and now flourished thick with flowers It was a sad sight but it showed us that the anchorage was calm

Now said Hands look there there's a pet bit for to beach a ship in Fine flat sand never a catspaw, trees all around of it, and flowers a blowing like a garding on that old ship'

And once beached I inquired how shall we get her off again?

Why so' he replied you take a line ashore there on the other side at low water take a turn about one o' them big pines bring it back take a turn around the capstan and lie-to for the tide Come high water all hands take a pull upon the line and off she comes as sweet as natur And now boy you stand by We're near the bit now and she's too much way on her Starboard a little—so—steady—starboard—larboard a little—steady—steady'

So he issued his commands which I breathlessly obeyed, till all of a sudden, he cried Now my hearty luff! And I put the helm hard up and the *Hispaniola* swung round rapidly, and ran stem on for the low wooded shore

The excitement of these last manœuvres had somewhat interfered with the watch I had kept hitherto sharply enough upon the coxswain Even then I was still so much interested waiting for the ship to touch that I had quite forgot the peril that hung over my head and stood craning over the starboard bulwarks and watching the ripples spreading wide before the bows I might

have fallen without a struggle for my life had not a sudden disquietude seized upon me and made me turn my head Perhaps I had heard a creak or seen his shadow moving with the tail of my eye perhaps it was an instinct like a cat's but sure enough when I looked round there was Hands already half-way towards me with the dirk in his right hand

We must both have cried out aloud when our eyes met but while mine was the shrill cry of terror his was a roar of fury like a charging bull's At the same instant he threw himself forward and I leapt sideways towards the bows As I did so I left hold of the tiller, which sprang sharp to leeward and I think this saved my life for it struck Hands across the chest and stopped him for the moment dead

Before he could recover I was safe out of the corner where he had me trapped with all the deck to dodge about Just forward of the mainmast I stopped drew a pistol from my pocket took a cool aim, though he had already turned and was once more coming directly after me and drew the trigger The hammer fell, but there followed neither flash nor sound the priming was useless with sea water I cursed myself for my neglect Why had not I, long before reprimed and re-loaded my only weapon? Then I should not have been, as now a mere fleeing sheep before this butcher

Wounded as he was it was wonderful how fast he could move his grizzled hair tumbling over his face and his face itself as red as a red ensign with his haste and fury I had no time to try my other pistol nor indeed much inclination for I was sure it would be useless One thing I saw plainly I must not simply retreat before him or he would speedily hold me boxed into the bows as a moment since he had so nearly boxed me in the stern Once so caught and nine or ten inches of the blood stained dirk would be my last experience on this side of eternity I placed my palms against the mainmast which was of a goodish bigness and waited every nerve upon the stretch

Seeing that I meant to dodge he also paused and a moment or two passed in feints on his part and corresponding movements upon mine It was such a game as I had often played at home about the rocks of Black Hill Cove but never before you may be sure with such a wildly beating heart as now Still, as I say it was a boy's game and I thought I could hold my own at it, against an elderly seaman with a wounded thigh Indeed my courage had begun to rise so high that I allowed myself a few darting thoughts on what would be the end of the affair and while I saw certainly that I could spin it out for long, I saw no hope of any ultimate escape

Well while things stood thus suddenly the *Hispaniola* struck, staggered, ground for an instant in the sand and then, swift as a blow canted over to the port side till the deck stood at an angle of forty-five degrees and about a puncheon of water splashed into the scupper holes and lay in a pool between the deck and bulwark

We were both of us capsized in a second and both of us rolled almost together into the scuppers, the dead red cap with his arms still spread out, tumbling stiffly after us So near were we indeed that my head came against the coxswain's foot with a crack that made my teeth rattle Blow and all I

was the first afoot again for Hands had got involved with the dead body The sudden canting of the ship had made the deck no place for running on I had to find some new way of escape and that upon the instant for my foe was almost touching me Quick as thought I prang into the mizzen shrouds rattled up hand over hand and did not draw a breath till I was seated on the cross trees

I had been saved by being prompt the dirk had struck not half a foot below me as I pursued my upward flight and there stood Israel Hands with his mouth open and his face upturned to mine a perfect statue of surprise and disappointment

Now that I had a moment to myself I lost no time in changing the priming of my pistol and then, having one ready for service to make assurance doubly sure I proceeded to draw the load of the other and recharge it afresh from the beginning

My new employment struck Hands all of a heap, he began to see the dice going against him and after an obvious hesitation he also hauled himself heavily into the shroud and with the dirk in his teeth began slowly and painfully to mount It cost him no end of time and groans to haul his wounded leg behind him and I had quietly finished my arrangements before he was much more than a third way up Then with a pistol in either hand I addressed him

One more step Mr Hands said I and I'll blow your brains out! Dead men don't bite you know I added with a chuckle

He stopped instantly I could see by the working of his face that he was trying to think and the process was so slow and laborious that in my new found security I laughed aloud At last with a swallow or two he spoke his face still wearing the same expression of extreme perplexity In order to speak he had to take the dagger from his mouth but in all else he remained unmoved

Jim says he I reckon we're fouled you and me and we will have to sign articles I'd have had you but for that there lurch but I don't have no luck, not I, and I reckon I'll have to strike which comes hard you see, for a master mariner to a ship's younker like you Jim'

I was drinking in his words and smiling away as conceited as a cock upon a wall when all in a breath back went his right hand over his shoulder Some thing sang like an arrow through the air I felt a blow and then a sharp pang, and there I was pinned by the shoulder to the mast In the horrid pain and surprise of the moment—I scarce can say it was by my own volition and I am sure it was without a conscious aim—both my pistols went off and both escaped out of my hands They did not fall alone with a choked cry the coxswain loosed his grasp upon the shrouds and plunged head first into the water

XXVII

PIECES OF EIGHT

OWING to the cant of the vessel the masts hung far out over the water and from my perch on the cross trees I had nothing below me but the surface of the bay

Hands who was not so far up was in consequence nearer to the ship and fell between me and the bulwarks He rose once to the surface in a lather of foam and blood and then sank again for good As the water settled I could see him lying huddled together on the clean bright sand in the shadow of the vessel's sides A fish or two whipped past his body Sometimes by the quivering of the water he appeared to move a little as if he were trying to rise But he was dead enough for all that being both shot and drowned and was food for fish in the very place where he had designed my slaughter

I was no sooner certain of this than I began to feel sick, faint and terrified The hot blood was running over my back and chest The dirk where it had pinned my shoulder to the mast seemed to burn like a hot iron yet it was not so much these real sufferings that distressed me, for these it seemed to me I could bear without a murmur it was the horror I had upon my mind of falling from the cross trees into that still green water beside the body of the coxswain

I clung with both hands till my nails ached and I shut my eyes as if to cover up the peril Gradually my mind came back again my pulses quieted down to a more natural time and I was once more in possession of myself

It was my first thought to pluck forth the dirk, but either it struck too hard or my nerve failed me and I desisted with a violent shudder Oddly enough that very shudder did the business The knife in fact had come the nearest in the world to missing me altogether it held me by a mere pinch of skin and this the shudder tore away The blood ran down the faster to be sure but I was my own master again and only tacked to the mast by my coat and shirt

These last I broke through with a sudden jerk and then regained the deck by the starboard shrouds For nothing in the world would I have again ventured shaken as I was upon the overhanging port shrouds from which Israel had so lately fallen

I went below and did what I could for my wound it pained me a good deal, and still bled freely, but it was neither deep nor dangerous nor did it greatly gall me when I used my arm Then I looked around me and as the ship was now in a sense my own I began to think of clearing it from its last passenger—the dead man O'Brien

He had pitched as I have said against the bulwarks where he lay like some horrible ungainly sort of puppet, life sized indeed but how different from life's colour or life's comeliness! In that position I could easily have my way with him and as the habit of tragical adventures had worn off almost all my terror for the dead I took him by the waist as if he had been a sack of bran, and with one good heave tumbled him overboard He went in with a sounding plunge the red cap came off and remained floating on the surface, and as soon as the splash subsided I could see him and Israel lying side by side both wavering with the tremulous movement of the water O'Brien though still quite a young man was very bald There he lay with that bald head across the knees of the man who had killed him and the quick fishes steering to and fro over both

I was now alone upon the ship, the tide had just turned The sun was within so few degrees of setting that already the shadow of the pines upon the western

shore began to reach right across the anchorage and fall in patterns on the deck The evening breeze had sprung up and though it was well warded off by the hill with the two peaks upon the east the cordage had begun to sing a little softly to itself and the idle sails to rattle to and fro

I began to see a danger to the ship The jibs I speedily doused and brought tumbling to the deck, but the mainsail was a harder matter Of course, when the schooner canted over the boom had swung out board and the cap of it and a foot or two of sail hung even under water I thought this made it still more dangerous yet the strain was so heavy that I had feared to meddle At last I got my knife and cut the halyards The peak dropped instantly, a great belly of loose canvas floated broad upon the water, and since pull as I liked, I could not budge the downhaul, that was the extent of what I could accomplish For the rest the *Hispaniola* must trust to luck like myself

By this time the whole anchorage had fallen into shadow—the last rays, I remember, falling through a glade of the wood and shining bright as jewels, on the flowery mantle of the wreck It began to be chill, the tide was rapidly fleeting seaward, the schooner settling more and more on her beam ends

I scrambled forward and looked over It seemed shallow enough and holding the cut hawser in both hands for a last security I let myself drop softly over board The water scarcely reached my waist the sand was firm and covered with ripple marks and I waded ashore in great spirits leaving the *Hispaniola* on her side with her mainsail trailing wide upon the surface of the bay About the same time the sun went fairly down and the breeze whistled low in the dusk among the tossing pines

At least, and at last, I was off the sea nor had I returned thence empty handed There lay the schooner, clear at last from buccaneers and ready for our own men to board and get to sea again I had nothing nearer by fancy than to get home to the stockade and boast of my achievements Possibly I might be blamed a bit for my truancy, but the recapture of the *Hispaniola* was a clenching answer and I hoped that even Captain Smollett would confess I had not lost my time

So thinking and in famous spirits I began to set my face homeward for the block house and my companions I remembered that the most easterly of the rivers which drain into Captain Kidd's anchorage ran from the two peaked hill upon my left and I bent my course in that direction that I might pass the stream while it was small The wood was pretty open and keeping along the lower spurs I had soon turned the corner of that hill, and not long after waded to the mid calf across the water course

This brought me near to where I had encountered Ben Gunn the maroon and I walked more circumspectly keeping an eye on every side The dusk had come nigh hand completely and, as I opened out the cleft between the two peaks I became aware of a wavering glow against the sky where as I judged, the man of the island was cooking his supper before a roaring fire And yet I wondered, in my heart that he should show himself so careless For if I could see this radiance, might it not reach the eyes of Silver himself where he camped upon the shore among the marshes?

Gradually the night fell blacker it was all I could do to guide myself even roughly towards my destination the double hill behind me and the Spy glass on my right hand loomed faint and fainter the stars were few and pale and in the low ground where I wandered I kept tripping among bushes and rolling into sandy pits

Suddenly a kind of brightness fell about me I looked up a pale glimmer of moon beams had alighted on the summit of the Spy glass and soon after I saw something broad and silvery moving low down behind the trees and knew the moon had risen

With this to help me I passed rapidly over what remained to me of my journey and sometimes walking sometimes running impatiently drew near to the stockade Yet as I began to thread the grove that lies before it I was not so thoughtless but that I slackened my pace and went a trifle warily It would have been a poor end of my adventures to get shot down by my own party in mistake

The moon was climbing higher and higher its light began to fall here and there in masses through the more open districts of the wood and right in front of me a glow of a different colour appeared among the trees It was red and hot and now again it was a little darkened—as it were the embers of a bonfire smouldering

For the life of me I could not think what it might be

At last I came right down upon the borders of the clearing The western end was already steeped in moonshine the rest and the block-house itself still lay in a black shadow chequered with long silvery streaks of light On the other side of the house an immense fire had burned itself into clear embers and shed a steady red reverberation, contrasted strongly with the mellow paleness of the moon There was not a soul stirring nor a sound beside the noises of the breeze

I stopped with much wonder in my heart and perhaps a little terror also It had not been our way to build great fires we were indeed by the captain's orders somewhat niggardly of firewood and I began to fear that something had gone wrong while I was absent

I stole round by the eastern end keeping close in shadow and at a convenient place where the darkness was thickest crossed the palisade

To make assurance surer I got upon my hands and knees and crawled without a sound towards the corner of the house As I drew nearer my heart was suddenly and greatly lightened It is not a pleasant noise in itself and I have often complained of it at other times, but just then it was like music to hear my friends snoring together so loud and peaceful in their sleep The sea cry of the watch that beautiful All's well never fell more reassuringly on my ear

In the meantime there was no doubt of one thing they kept an infamous bad watch If it had been Silver and his lads that were now creeping in on them, not a soul would have seen daybreak That was what it was thought I to have the captain wounded and again I blamed myself sharply for leaving them in that danger with so few to mount guard

By this time I had got to the door and stood up All was dark within so that I could distinguish nothing by the eye As for sounds there was the steady drone of the snorers and a small occasional noise a flickering or pecking that I could in no way account for

With my arms before me I walked steadily in I should lie down in my own place (I thought with a silent chuckle) and enjoy their faces when they found me in the morning

My foot struck something yielding—it was a sleeper's leg and he turned and groaned but without awaking

And then all of a sudden a shrill voice broke forth out of the darkness

Pieces of eight! and so forth without pause or change, like the clacking of a tiny mill

Silver's green parrot Captain Flint! It was she whom I had heard pecking at a piece of bark it was she keeping better watch than any human being, who thus announced my arrival with her wearisome refrain

I had no time left me to recover At the sharp clipping tone of the parrot, the sleepers awoke and sprang up and with a mighty oath the voice of Silver cried —

Who goes?

I turned to run, struck violently against one person recoiled and ran full into the arms of a second who for his part closed upon and held me tight

Bring a torch Dick said Silver when my capture was thus assured

And one of the men left the log house and presently returned with a lighted brand

PART VI

CAPTAIN SILVER

XXVIII

IN THE ENEMY'S CAMP

THE RED GLARE of the torch lighting up the interior of the block house showed me the worst of my apprehensions realised The pirates were in possession of the house and stores there was the cask of cognac there were the pork and bread as before and what tenfold increased my horror not a sign of any prisoner I could only judge that all had perished and my heart smote me sorely that I had not been there to perish with them

There were six of the buccaneers all told not another man was left alive Five of them were on their feet flushed and swollen suddenly called out of the first sleep of drunkenness The sixth had only risen upon his elbow he was deadly pale and the blood-stained bandage round his head told that he had recently been wounded and still more recently dressed I remembered the

man who had been shot and had run back among the woods in the great attack and doubted not that this was he

The parrot sat preening her plumage on Long John's shoulder. He himself, I thought looked somewhat paler and more stern than I was used to. He still wore the fine broadcloth suit in which he had fulfilled his mission but it was bitterly the worse for wear daubed with clay and torn with the sharp briers of the wood.

So said he here's Jim Hawkins shiver my timbers! dropped in like, eh? Well come I take that friendly

And thereupon he sat down across the brandy cask and began to fill a pipe

Give me a loan of the link Dick said he and then, when he had a good light that'll do lad he added stick the glim in the wood heap and you gentlemen bring yourselves to'—you needn't stand up for Mr Hawkins he'll excuse you you may lay to that. And so, Jim—stopping the tobacco—here you were and quite a pleasant surprise for poor old John I see you were smart when first I set my eyes on you but this here gets away from me clean, it do "

To all this as may be well supposed I made no answer. They had set me with my back against the wall, and I stood there looking Silver in the face, pluckily enough I hope, to all outward appearance but with black despair in my heart.

Silver took a whiff or two of his pipe with great composure and then ran on again.

Now you see Jim so be as you *are* here ' says he ' I'll give you a piece of my mind I've always liked you I have for a lad of spirit and the picter of my own self when I was young and handsome I always wanted you to jine and take your share and die a gentleman and now my cock you've got to Cap'n Smollett's a fine seaman as I'll own up to any day but stiff on discipline Dooty is dooty says he and right he is Just you keep clear of the cap'n The doctor himself is gone dead again you—ungrateful scamp was what he said and the short and the long of the whole story is about here you can't go back to your own lot for they won't have you and without you start a third ship's company all by yourself, which might be lonely you'll have to jine with Cap'n Silver

So far so good. My friends then were still alive, and though I partly believed the truth of Silver's statement that the cabin party were incensed at me for my desertion I was more relieved than distressed by what I heard.

'I don't say nothing as to your being in our hands' continued Silver though there you are and you may lay to it I'm all for argyment I never seen good come o' threatening If you like the service well you'll jine and if you don't Jim why you're free to answer no—free and welcome shipmate, and if fairer can be said by mortal seaman shiver my sides'

Am I to answer then? I asked with a very tremulous voice. Through all this sneering talk I was made to feel the threat of death that overhung me, and my cheeks burned and my heart beat painfully in my breast.

Lad said Silver, no one's a pressing of you Take your bearings None of us won't hurry you mate, time goes so pleasant in your company you see"

Well says I growing a bit bolder "if I'm to choose I declare I have a right to know what's what and why you're here and where my friends are

Wot's wot?" repeated one of the buccaneers in a deep growl. Ah he'd be a lucky one as knowed that!

You'll perhaps batten down your hatches till you're spoke my friend cried Silver truculently to this speaker. And then in his first gracious tones he replied to me. Yesterday morning Mr Hawkins said he in the dog watch, down came Doctor Livesey with a flag of truce. Says he Cap'n Silver you're sold out. Ship's gone Well, maybe we'd been taking a glass and a song to help it round I won't say no Leastwise none of us had looked out. We looked out and by thunder, the old ship was gone I never seen a pack o' fools look fishier and you may lay to that if I tells you that looked the fishiest Well, says the doctor let's bargain We bargained him and I and here we are stores brandy block house the firewood you was thoughtful enough to cut, and in a manner of speaking the whole blessed boat from cross trees to kelson. As for them they've tramped, I don't know where's they are'

He drew again quietly at his pipe

"And lest you should take it into that head of yours" he went on "that you was included in the treaty here's the last word that was said How many are you says I to leave? Four says he—four and one of us wounded. As for that boy I don't know where he is confound him says he nor I don't much care. We're about sick of him These was his words

Is that all?" I asked

"Well it's all that you're to hear my son," returned Silver

"And now I am to choose?"

"And now you are to choose and you may lay to that said Silver

"Well said I I am not such a fool but I know pretty well what I have to look for Let the worst come to the worst it's little I care I've seen too many die since I fell in with you But there's a thing or two I have to tell you" I said and by this time I was quite excited and the first is this here you are in a bad way ship lost treasure lost men lost your whole business gone to wreck and if you want to know who did it—it was I! I was in the apple barrel the night we sighted land and I heard you John and you Dick Johnson and Hands who is now at the bottom of the sea and told every word you said before the hour was out And as for the schooner it was I who cut her cable and it was I that killed the men you had aboard of her, and it was I who brought her where you'll never see her more not one of you The laughs on my side I've had the top of this business from the first I no more fear you than I fear a fly Kill me if you please or spare me But one thing I'll say and no more if you spare me bygones are bygones and when you fellows are in court for piracy I'll save you all I can It is for you to choose Kill another and do yourselves no good, or spare me and keep a witness to save you from the gallows

I stopped for I tell you I was out of breath and to my wonder, not a man of them moved but all sat staring at me like as many sheep And while they were still staring I broke out again —

And now Mr Silver' I said I believe you're the best man here and if things go the worst I'll take it kind of you to let the doctor know the way I took it

I'll bear in mind said Silver with an accent so curious that I could not, for the life of me decide whether he were laughing at my request or had been favourably affected by my courage

I'll put one to that cried the old mahogany faced seaman—Morgan by name—whom I had seen in Long John's public house upon the quays of Bristol. It was him that knowed Black Dog

Well and see here added the sea cook I'll put another again to that, by thunder' for it was this same boy that faked the chart from Billy Bones' First and last we've split upon Jim Hawkins'

Then here goes' said Morgan with an oath

And he sprang up drawing his knife as if he had been twenty

Avast there' cried Silver Who are you Tom Morgan? Maybe you thought you was cap'n here perhaps By the powers but I'll teach you better! Cross me and you'll go where many a good man's gone before you first and last these thirty years back—some to the yard arm shiver my sides and some by the board and all to feed the fishes There's never a man looked me between the eyes and seen a good day a terwairds Tom Morgan you may lay to that

Morgan paused but a hoarse murmur rose from the others

Tom's right said one

I stood hazing long enough from one, added another I'll be hanged if I'll be hazed by you John Silver

Did any of you gentlemen want to have it out with me? roared Silver bending far forward from his position on the keg with his pipe still glowing in his right hand Put a name on what you're at you ain't dumb I reckon Him that wants shall get it Have I lived this many years and a son of a rum puncheon cock his hat athwart my hawse at the latter end of it? You know the way you're all gentlemen o' fortune by your account Well I'm ready Take a cutlass him that dares and I'll see the colour of his inside, crutch and all before that pipe's empty

Not a man stirred not a man answered

That's your sort is it? he added returning his pipe to his mouth Well, you're a gay lot to look at anyway Not much worth to fight you ain't P'raps you can understand King George's English I'm cap'n here by lecture I'm cap'n here because I'm the best man by a long sea mile You won't fight as gentlemen o' fortune should then by thunder you'll obey and you may lay to it! I like that boy now I never seen a better boy than that He's more a man than any pair of rats of you in this here house and what I say is this let me see him that'll lay a hand on him—that's what I say and you may lay to it

There was a long pause after this I stood straight up against the wall my heart still going like a sledge hammer but with a ray of hope now shining in my bosom Silver leant back against the wall his arms crossed his pipe in the

corner of his mouth as calm as though he had been in church yet his eye kept wandering furtively and he kept the tail of it on his unruly followers They on their part drew gradually together towards the far end of the block house, and the low hiss of their whispering sounded in my ear continuously like a stream One after another they would lool up and the red light of the torch would fall for a second on their nervous faces but it was not towards me it was towards Silver that they turned their eyes

You seem to have a lot to say remarked Silver spitting far into the air
"Pipe up and let me hear it or lay to

Ax your pardon sir returned one of the men you're pretty free with some of the rules maybe you'll kindly keep an eye upon the rest This crews dissatisfied this crew don't vally bullying and marlin spike this crew has its rights like other crews I'll make so free as that and by your own rules I take it we can talk together I ax your pardon sir acknowledging you to be captng at this present but I claim my right and steps outside for a council

And with an elaborate sea salute this fellow a long ill looking yellow eyed man of five and thirty stepped coolly towards the door and disappeared out of the house One after another the rest followed his example each making a salute as he passed each adding some apology According to rules said one Foc'sle council said Morgan And so with one remark or another all marched out and left Silver and me alone with the torch

The sea cook instantly removed his pipe

Now look you here Jim Hawkins he said in a steady whisper that was no more than audible you're within half a plank of death and what's a long sight worse of torture They're going to throw me off But you mark I stand by you through thick and thin I didn't mean to no not till you spoke up I was about desperate to lose that much blunt and be hanged into the bargain But I see you was the right sort I says to myself You stand by Hawkins John and Hawkins'll stand by you You're his last card and by the living thunder John he's yours! Back to back says I You save your witness and he'll save your neck!

I began dimly to understand

You mean all's lost? I asked

Ay by gum I do! he answered Ship gone neck gone—that's the size of it Once I looked into that bay Jim Hawkins and seen no schooner—well I'm tough but I gave out As for that lot and their council mark me they're outright fools and cowards I'll save your life—if so be as I can—from them But, see here Jim—tit for tat—you save Long John from swinging

I was bewildered it seemed a thing so hopeless he was asking—he, the old buccaneer, the ringleader throughout

What I can do that I'll do I said

It's a bargain, cried Long John You speak up plucky, and by thunder! I've a chance

He hobbled to the torch where it stood propped among the firewood, and took a fresh light to his pipe

Understand me Jim he said returning I've a head on my shoulders I

have I'm on squire's side now I know you've got that ship safe somewhere's How you done it I don't know but safe it is I guess Hands and O'Brien turned soft I never much believed in neither of *them* Now you mark me I ask no questions nor I won't let others I know when a game's up I do and I know a lad that's staunch Ah you that's young—you and me might have done a power of good together!

He drew some cognac from the cask into a tin cannikin

Will you taste messmate? he asked and when I had refused 'Well I'll take a dram myself Jim said he I need a caulk for there's trouble on hand And, talking o trouble why did that doctor give me the chart Jim?

My face expressed a wonder so unaffected that he saw the needlessness of further questions

Ah well he did though said he And there's something under that, no doubt—something surely under that Jim—bad or good

And he took another swallow of the brandy, shaking his great fair head like a man who looks forward to the worst

XXIX

THE BLACK SPOT AGAIN

THE council of the buccaneers had lasted some time when one of them re entered the house and with a repetition of the same salute, which had in my eyes an ironical air begged for a moment's loan of the torch Silver briefly agreed and this emissary retired again leaving us together in the dark

There's a breeze coming Jim said Silver who had by this time, adopted quite a friendly and familiar tone

I turned to the loophole nearest me and looked out The embers of the great fire had so far burned themselves out and now glowed so low and duskily, that I understood why these conspirators desired a torch About half way down the slope to the stockade they were collected in a group one held the light, another was on his knees in their midst and I saw the blade of an open knife shine in his hands with varying colours in the moon and torchlight The rest were all somewhat stooping as though watching the manœuvres of this last. I could just make out that he had a book as well as a knife in his hand and was still wondering how anything so incongruous had come in their possession, when the kneeling figure rose once more to his feet, and the whole party began to move together towards the house

Here they come said I and I returned to my former position, for it seemed beneath my dignity that they should find me watching them

Well, let 'em come lad—let 'em come said Silver cheerily I've still a shot in my locker'

The door opened and the five men standing huddled together just inside, pushed one of their number forward In any other circumstances it would

have been comical to see his slow advance hesitating as he set down each foot, but holding his closed right hand in front of him

'Step up lad cried Silver I won't eat you Hand it over, lubber I know the rules, I do I won't hurt a depytation

Thus encouraged the buccaneer stepped forth more briskly, and having passed something to Silver from hand to hand slipped yet more smartly back again to his companions

The sea cook looked at what had been given him

'The black spot' I thought so, he observed Where might you have got the paper? Why hillo! look here now this ain't lucky! You've gone and cut this out of a Bible What fools cut a Bible?'

Ah there! said Morgan— there! Wot did I say? No good'll come o that, I said.

Well, you've about fixed it now among you" continued Silver "You'll all swing now, I reckon What soft headed lubber had a Bible?"

'It was Dick' said one

'Dick was it? Then Dick can get to prayers said Silver He's seen his slice of luck, has Dick and you may lay to that'

But here the long man with the yellow eyes struck in

'Belay that talk John Silver, he said 'This crew has tipped you the black spot in full council as in dooty bound just you turn it over, as in dooty bound, and see what's wrote there Then you can talk'

Thanky George, ' replied the sea cook 'You always was brisk for business, and has the rules by heart, George as I'm pleased to see Well what is it, any way? Ah! Deposed—that's it is it? Very pretty wrote to be sure like print, I swear Your hand o write, George? Why you was gettin quite a leadin man in this here crew You'll be cap'n next I shouldn't wonder Just oblige me with that torch again will you? This pipe won't draw

Come now, said George you don't fool this crew no more You're a funny man by your account but you're over now, and you'll maybe step down off that barrel and help vote

I thought you said you knowed the rules returned Silver contemptuously 'Leastways if you don't I do, and I wait here—and I'm still your cap'n mind—till you outs with your grievances and I reply, in the meantime, your black spot ain't worth a biscuit After that we'll see'

Oh replied George you don't be under no kind of apprehension we're all square we are First, you've made a hash of this cruise—you'll be a bold man to say no to that Second you let the enemy out o this here trap for nothing Why did they want out? I dunno, but it's pretty plain they wanted it Third you wouldn't let us go at them upon the march Oh we see through you John Silver you want to play booty, that's what's wrong with you And then, fourth, there's this here boy

Is that all? asked Silver quietly

'Enough too, retorted George Well all swing and sun-dry for your bungling

Well, now, look here I'll answer these four p'ints one after another I'll

answer 'em I made a hash o' this cruise did I? Well, now you all know what I wanted and you all know, if that had been done, that we'd 'a' been aboard the *Hispaniola* this night as ever was every man of us alive and fit, and full of good plum duff and the treasure in the hold of her by thunder! Well who crossed me? Who forced my hand as was the lawful cap'n? Who tipped me the black spot the day we landed and began this dance? Ah it's a fine dance—I'm with you there—and looks mighty like a hornpipe in a rope's end at Execution Dock by London town it does But who done it? Why it was Anderson, and Hands and you George Merry! And you're the last above board of that same meddling crew, and you have the Davy Jones's insolence to up and stand for cap'n over me—you that sank the lot of us! By the Powers! but this tops the stiffest yarn to nothing

Silver paused and I could see by the faces of George and his late comrades that these words had not been said in vain

That's for number one' cried the accused wiping the sweat from his brow for he had been talking with a vehemence that shook the house 'Why, I give you my word I'm sick to speak to you You've neither sense nor memory and I leave it to fancy where your mothers was that let you come to sea Sea! Gentlemen o' fortune! I reckon tailors is your trade'

Go on John said Morgan Speak up to the others

"Ah, the others' returned John They're a nice lot, ain't they? You say this cruise is bungled Ah! by gum if you could understand how bad it's bungled you would see! We're that near the gibbet that my neck's stiff with thinking on it You've seen 'em maybe hanged in chains birds about 'em, seamen putting 'em out as they go down with the tide Who's that? says one That! Why that's John Silver I knowed him well says another And you can hear the chains a jangle as you go about and reach for the other buoy Now that's about where we are every mother's son of us thanks to him and Hands and Anderson and other ruination fools of you And if you want to know about number four and that boy why shiver my timbers! isn't he a hostage? Are we a-going to waste a hostage? No not us, he might be our last chance and I shouldn't wonder Kill that boy? not me mates! And number three? Ah well there's a deal to say to number three Maybe you don't count it nothing to have a real college doctor come to see you every day—you, John, with your head broke—or you George Merry that had the ague shakes upon you not six hours agone and has your eyes the colour of lemon peel to this same moment on the clock? And maybe perhaps, you didn't know there was a consort coming either? But there is and not so long till then and we'll see who'll be glad to have a hostage when it comes to that. And as for number two and why I made a bargain—well you came crawling on your knees to me to make it—on your knees you came you was that downhearted—and you'd have starved too if I hadn't—but that's a trifle! you look there—that's why'

And he cast down upon the floor a paper that I instantly recognised—none other than the chart on yellow paper, with the three red crosses that I had found in the oilcloth at the bottom of the captain's chest Why the doctor had given it to him was more than I could fancy

But if it were inexplicable to me the appearance of the chart was incredible to the surviving mutineers They leaped upon it like cats upon a mouse It went from hand to hand one tearing it from another and by the oaths and the cries and the childish laughter with which they accompanied their examination, you would have thought not only they were fingering the very gold but were at sea with it besides in safety

Yes said one that's Flint sure enough J F , and a score below, with a clove hitch to it, so he done ever

Mighty pretty, said George But how are we to get away with it, and u no ship?

Silver suddenly sprang up and supporting himself with a hand against the wall Now I give you warning George he cried One more word of your sauce and I'll call you down and fight you How? Why how do I know? You had ought to tell me that—you and the rest that lost me my schooner with your interference burn you! But not you you can't you hain't got the invention of a cockroach But civil you can speak and shall George Merry, you may lay to that

"That's fair enow" said the old man Morgan

'Fair' I reckon so ' said the sea cook You lost the ship I found the treasure Who's the better man at that? And now I resign by thunder! Elect whom you please to be your cap'n now I'm done with it

Silver! they cried Barbecue for ever! Barbecue for cap'n!

'So that's the toon is it?' cried the cook George, I reckon you'll have to wait another turn, friend and lucky for you as I'm not a revengeful man But that was never my way And now, shipmates this black spot? Taint much good now is it? Dick's crossed his luck and spoiled his Bible and that's about all

It'll do to kiss the book on still won't it?" growled Dick, who was evidently uneasy at the curse he had brought upon himself

A Bible with a bit cut out! returned Silver derisively Not it It don't bind no more'n a ballad book

Don't it though?" cried Dick with a sort of joy Well I reckon that's worth having too

Here, Jim—here's a cur'osity for you ' said Silver, and he tossed me the paper

It was a round about the size of a crown piece One side was blank for it had been the last leaf the other contained a verse or two of Revelation—these words among the rest which struck sharply home upon my mind

Without are dogs and murderers ' The printed side had been blackened with wood ash which already began to come off and soil my fingers on the blank side had been written with the same material the one word Deposed I have that curiosity beside me at this moment but not a trace of writing now remains beyond a single scratch such as a man might make with his thumb nail

That was the end of the night's business Soon after with a drink all round, we lay down to sleep and the outside of Silver's vengeance was to put George

Merry up for sentinel, and threaten him with death if he should prove unfaithful

It was long ere I could close an eye and Heaven knows I had matter enough for thought in the man whom I had slain that afternoon in my own most perilous position and above all in the remarkable game that I saw Silver now engaged upon—keeping the mutineers together with one hand and grasping, with the other after every means possible and impossible to make his peace and save his miserable life He himself slept peacefully and snored aloud, yet my heart was sore for him wicked as he was to think on the dark perils that environed, and the shameful gibbet that awaited him

XXX

No PAROLE

I WAS WAKENED—indeed, we were all wakened for I could see even the sentinel shake himself together from where he had fallen against the door-post—by a clear hearty voice hailing us from the margin of the wood —

Block house ahoy' it cried Here's the doctor

And the doctor it was Although I was glad to hear the sound yet my gladness was not without admixture I remembered with confusion my insubordinate and stealthy conduct and when I saw where it had brought me—among what companions and surrounded by what dangers—I felt ashamed to look him in the face

He must have risen in the dark for the day had hardly come, and when I ran to a loophole and looked out I saw him standing, like Silver once before up to the midleg in creeping vapour

'You, doctor' Top o the morning to you sir' cried Silver broad awake and beaming with good nature in a moment Bright and early to be sure and it's the early bird as the saying goes that gets the rations George shake up your timbers son and help Dr Livesey over the ship's side All a-doin well your patients was—all well and merry

So he pattered on standing on the hill top with his crutch under his elbow, and one hand upon the side of the long house—quite the old John in voice, manner and expression

We've quite a surprise for you too sir" he continued "We've a little stranger here—he' he' A noo boarder and lodger sir and looking fit and taut as a fiddle, sleep like a supercargo he did right alongside of John—stem to stem we was all night

Dr Livesey was by this time across the stockade and pretty near the cook, and I could hear the alteration in his voice as he said—

'Not Jim'

The very same Jim as ever was says Silver

The doctor stopped outright although he did not speak and it was some seconds before he seemed able to move on.

"Well, well" he said, at last, "duty first and pleasure afterwards as you might have said yourself Silver Let us overhaul these patients of yours

A moment afterwards he had entered the block house and with one grim nod to me proceeded with his work among the sick He seemed under no apprehension though he must have known that his life among these treacherous demons, depended on a hair, and he rattled on to his patients as if he were paying an ordinary professional visit in a quiet English family His manner I suppose reacted on the men, for they behaved to him as if nothing had occurred—as if he were still ship's doctor, and they still faithful hands before the mast

You're doing well, my friend" he said to the fellow with the bandaged head and if ever any person had a close shave it was you your head must be as hard as iron Well, George, how goes it? You're a pretty colour certainly, why, your liver man is upside down Did you take that medicine? Did he take that medicine men?

"Ay, ay, sir, he took it sure enough" returned Morgan

"Because you see since I am mutineers doctor or prison doctor as I prefer to call it," says Dr Livesey, in his pleasant way I make it a point of honour not to lose a man for King George (God bless him!) and the gallows

The rogues looked at each other but swallowed the home thrust in silence
"Dick don't feel well sir" said one

"Don't he?" replied the doctor Well step up here Dick and let me see your tongue No I should be surprised if he did! the man's tongue is fit to frighten the French Another fever

"Ah there," said Morgan that comed of spilling Bibles'

That comed—as you call it—of being arrant asses retorted the doctor and not having sense enough to know honest air from poison and the dry land from a vile pestiferous slough I think it most probable—though of course it's only an opinion—that you'll all have the deuce to pay before you get that malaria out of your systems Camp in a bog would you? Silver I'm surprised at you You're less of a fool than many take you all round but you don't appear to me to have the rudiments of a notion of the rules of health"

Well' he added after he had dosed them round and they had taken his prescriptions with really laughable humility more like charity school children than blood guilty mutineers and pirates—well that's done for today And now I should wish to have a talk with that boy please

And he nodded his head in my direction carelessly

George Merry was at the door spitting and spluttering over some bad tasting medicine but at the first word of the doctor's proposal he swung round with a deep flush and cried 'No' and swore

Silver struck the barrel with his open hand

Si-lence! he roared and looked about him positively like a lion Doctor, he went on in his usual tones I was a thinking of that knowing as how you had a fancy for the boy We're all humbly grateful for your kindness and as you see puts faith in you, and takes the drugs down like that much grog And I take it, I've found a way as'll suit all Hawkins will you give me your

word of honour as a young gentleman—for a young gentleman you are, although poor born—your word of honour not to slip your cable?

I readily gave the pledge required

Then doctor said Silver you just step outside o that stockade and once you're there, I'll bring the boy down on the inside and I reckon you can yarn through the spars Good day to you sir and all our dooties to the squire and Cap'n Smollett

The explosion of disapproval which nothing but Silver's black looks had restrained broke out immediately the doctor had left the house Silver was roundly accused of playing double—of trying to make a separate peace for himself—of sacrificing the interests of his accomplices and victims and in one word of the identical exact thing that he was doing It seemed to me so obvious, in this case that I could not imagine how he was to turn their anger But he was twice the man the rest were and his last night's victory had given him a huge preponderance on their minds He called them all the fools and dolts you can imagine said it was necessary I should talk to the doctor fluttered the chart in their faces asked them if they could afford to break the treaty the very day they were bound a treasure hunting

No by thunder' he cried it's us must break the treaty when the time comes and till then I'll gammon that doctor if I have to ile his boots with brandy

And then he bade them get the fire lit and stalked out upon his crutch with his hand on my shoulder leaving them in a disarray and silenced by his volubility rather than convinced

Slow lad slow he said They might round upon us in a twinkle of an eye if we was seen to hurry'

Very deliberately then did we advance across the sand to where the doctor awaited us on the other side of the stockade and as soon as we were within easy speaking distance Silver stopped

You'll make a note of this here also doctor says he 'and the boy'll tell you how I saved his life and were deposed for it, too and you may lay to that Doctor when a man's steering as near the wind as me—playing chuck-farthing with the last breath in his body like—you wouldn't think it too much, mayhap to give him one good word? You'll please bear in mind it's not my life only now—it's that boy's into the bargain and you'll speak me fair, doctor and give me a bit o hope to go on for the sake of mercy

Silver was a changed man once he was out there and had his back to his friends and the block house, his cheeks seemed to have fallen in, his voice trembled never was a soul more dead in earnest

Why John you're not afraid' asked Dr Livesey

Doctor I'm no coward' no not I—not so much' and he snapped his fingers 'If I was I wouldn't say it But I'll own up fairly I've the shakes upon me for the gallows You're a good man and a true, I never seen a better man! And you'll not forget what I done good not any more than you'll forget the bad I know And I step aside—see here—and leave you and Jim alone And you'll put that down for me too for it's a long stretch is that!'

So saying he stepped back a little way till he was out of earshot and there sat down upon a tree stump and began to whistle spinning round now and again upon his seat so as to command a sight sometimes of me and the doctor and sometimes of his unruly ruffians as they went to and fro in the sand between the fire—which they were busy rekindling—and the house, from which they brought forth pork and bread to make the breakfast

So Jim said the doctor sadly here you are As you have brewed so shall you drink my boy Heaven knows I cannot find it in my heart to blame you but this much I will say be it kind or unkind when Captain Smollett was well, you dared not have gone off and when he was ill and couldn't help it, by George it was downright cowardly'

I will own that here I began to weep Doctor ' I said 'you might spare me. I have blamed myself enough my life's forfeit anyway and I should have been dead by now if Silver hadn't stood for me and doctor, believe this I can die—and I daresay I deserve it—but what I fear is torture If they come to torture me—

Jim the doctor interrupted and his voice was quite changed, "Jim, I can't have this Whip over and we'll run for it

Doctor said I I passed my word

I know I know he cried We can't help that, Jim now I'll take it on my shoulders holus bolus blame and shame my boy but stay here I cannot let you Jump! One jump and you're out and we'll run for it like antelopes

No I replied you know right well you wouldn't do the thing yourself neither you nor squire nor captain and no more will I Silver trusted me I passed my word and back I go But doctor you did not let me finish If they come to torture me, I might let slip a word of where the ship is for I got the ship part by luck and part by risking and she lies in North Inlet on the southern beach, and just below high water At half tide she must be high and dry

The ship! ' exclaimed the doctor

Rapidly I described to him my adventures and he heard me out in silence

There is a kind of fate in this he observed when I had done Every step it's you that saves our lives and do you suppose by any chance that we are going to let you lose yours? That would be a poor return, my boy You found out the plot you found Ben Gunn—the best deed that ever you did or will do though you live to ninety Oh by Jupiter and talking of Ben Gunn' why this is the mischief in person Silver! he cried Silver!—I'll give you a piece of advice he continued as the cook drew near again don't you be in any great hurry after that treasure '

Why sir I do my possible which that ain't said Silver ' I can only, asking your pardon save my life and the boy's by seeking for that treasure, and you may lay to that

'Well, Silver replied the doctor 'if that is so, I'll go one step further, look out for squalls when you find it

Sir, said Silver as between man and man that's too much and too little What you're after why you left the block house, why you given me that there

chart I don't know, now do I? and yet I done your bidding with my eyes shut and never a word of hope! But no, this here's too much. If you won't tell me what you mean plain out just say so and I'll leave the helm.

'No' said the doctor musingly. 'I've no right to say more it's not my secret you see. Silver or I give you my word I'd tell it you. But I'll go as far with you as I dare go and a step beyond, for I'll have my wig sorted by the captain or I'm mistaken! And first I'll give you a bit of hope. Silver if we both get alive out of this wolf trap, I'll do my best to save you, short of perjury.'

Silver's face was radiant. 'You couldn't say more I'm sure sir, not if you was my mother' he cried.

'Well that's my first concession,' added the doctor. 'My second is a piece of advice. Keep the boy close beside you, and when you need help halloo. I'm off to seek it for you and that itself will show you if I speak at random. Good bye Jim.'

And Dr Livesey shook hands with me through the stockade, nodded to Silver, and set off at a brisk pace into the wood.

XXXI

THE TREASURE HUNT—FLINT'S POINTER

JIM said Silver when we were alone 'if I saved your life you saved mine and I'll not forget it. I seen the doctor waving you to run for it—with the tail of my eye I did and I seen you say no, as plain as hearing. Jim that's one to you. This is the first glint of hope I had since the attack failed and I owe it you. And now Jim we're to go in for this here treasure hunting with sealed orders too, and I don't like it and you and me must stick close, back to back like, and we'll save our necks in spite o' fate and fortune.'

Just then a man hailed us from the fire that breakfast was ready and we were soon seated here and there about the sand over biscuit and fried junk. They had lit a fire fit to roast an ox and it was now grown so hot that they could only approach it from the windward, and even there not without precaution. In the same wasteful spirit they had cooked I suppose three times more than we could eat and one of them with an empty laugh threw what was left into the fire which blazed and roared again over this unusual fuel. I never in my life saw men so careless of the morrow, hand to mouth is the only word that can describe their way of doing, and what with wasted food and sleeping sentries though they were bold enough for a brush and be done with it I could see their entire unfitness for anything like a prolonged campaign.

Even Silver eating away with Captain Flint upon his shoulder had not a word of blame for their recklessness. And this the more surprised me for I thought he had never shown himself so cunning as he did then.

Ay mates said he it's lucky you have Barbecue to think for you with this here head I got what I wanted I did. Sure enough they have the ship

Where they have it I don't know yet, but once we hit the treasure we'll have to jump about and find out. And then, mates us that has the boats I reckon has the upper hand.

Thus he kept running on, with his mouth full of the hot bacon thus he restored their hope and confidence and I more than suspect repaired his own at the same time.

As for hostage" he continued that's his last talk I guess with them he loves so dear I've got my piece o' news and thanky to him for that but it's over and done I'll take him in a line when we go treasure hunting for we'll keep him like so much gold in case of accidents you mark and in the mean time Once we got the ship and treasure both and off to sea like jolly companions, why then, we'll talk Mr Hawkins over, we will and we'll give him his share to be sure for all his kindness'

It was no wonder the men were in a good humour now For my part I was horribly cast down Should the scheme he had now sketched prove feasible, Silver, already doubly a traitor would not hesitate to adopt it He had still a foot in either camp and there was no doubt he would prefer wealth and freedom with the pirates to a bare escape from hanging which was the best he had to hope on our side.

Nay, and even if things so fell out that he was forced to keep his faith with Dr Livesey, even then what danger lay before us! What a moment that would be when the suspicions of his followers turned to certainty and he and I should have to fight for dear life—he a cripple and I a boy—against five strong and active seamen!

Add to this double apprehension the mystery that still hung over the behaviour of my friends their unexplained desertion of the stockade their inexplicable cession of the chart or harder still to understand the doctor's last warning to Silver Look out for squalls when you find it and you will readily believe how little taste I found in my breakfast and with how uneasy a heart I set forth behind my captors on the quest for treasure.

We made a curious figure had anyone been there to see us all in soiled sailor clothes and all but me armed to the teeth Silver had two guns slung about him—one before and one behind—besides the great cutlass at his waist and a pistol in each pocket of his square tailed coat To complete his strange appearance Captain Flint sat perched upon his shoulder and gabbling odds and ends of purposeless sea talk I had a line about my waist, and followed obediently after the seacock who held the loose end of the rope now in his free hand now between his powerful teeth For all the world I was led like a dancing bear.

The other men were variously burthened some carrying picks and shovels—for that had been the very first necessary they brought ashore from the *Hispaniola*—others laden with pork bread and brandy for the mid day meal All the stores I observed came from our stock, and I could see the truth of Silver's words the night before Had he not struck a bargain with the doctor he and his mutineers, deserted by the ship must have been driven to subsist on clear

water and the proceeds of their hunting Water would have been little to their taste a sailor is not usually a good shot and besides all that when they were so short of eatables it was not likely they would be very flush of powder

Well thus equipped we all set out—even the fellow with the broken head, who should certainly have kept in shadow—and straggled one after another to the beach where the two gigs awaited us Even these bore trace of the drunken folly of the pirates one in a broken thwart and both in their muddied and unbaled condition Both were to be carried along with us for the sake of safety and so with our numbers divided between them we set forth upon the bosom of the anchorage

As we pulled over there was some discussion on the chart The red cross was of course far too large to be a guide and the terms of the note on the back as you will hear admitted of some ambiguity They ran the reader may remember thus —

Tall tree Spy glass Shoulder bearing a point to the N of N.N.E
Skeleton Island E.S.E and by E
Ten feet

A tall tree was thus the principal mark Now right before us the anchorage was bounded by a plateau from two or three hundred feet high adjoining on the north the sloping southern shoulder of the Spy glass and rising again towards the south into the rough cliffy eminence called the Mizzen-mast Hill The top of the plateau was dotted thickly with pine trees of varying height Every here and there one of a different species rose forty or fifty feet clear above its neighbors and which of these was the particular tall tree of Captain Flint could only be decided on the spot and by the readings of the compass

Yet although that was the case every man on board the boats had picked a favourite of his own ere we were half way over Long John alone shrugging his shoulders and bidding them wait till they were there

We pulled easily by Silver's directions not to weary the hands prematurely, and after quite a long passage landed at the mouth of the second river—that which runs down a woody cleft of the Spy glass Thence bending to our left, we began to ascend the slope towards the plateau

At the first outset heavy miry ground and a matted marish vegetation, greatly delayed our progress, but by little and little the hill began to steepen and become stony under foot and the wood to change its character and to grow in a more open order It was indeed a most pleasant portion of the island that we were now approaching A heavy scented broom and many flowering shrubs had almost taken the place of grass Thickets of green nutmeg trees were dotted here and there with the red columns and the broad shadow of the pines and the first mingled their spice with the aroma of the others The air besides was fresh and stirring and this under the sheer sunbeams was a wonderful refreshment to our senses

The party spread itself abroad in a fan shape shouting and leaping to and fro About the centre and a good way behind the rest Silver and I followed

—I tethered by my rope he ploughing with deep pants among the sliding gravel From time to time indeed I had to lend him a hand or he must have missed his footing and fallen backward down the hill

We had thus proceeded for about half a mile and were approaching the brow of the plateau when the man upon the farthest left began to cry aloud as if in terror Shout after shout came from him and the others began to run in his direction

He can't a found the treasure said old Morgan, hurrying past us from the right for that's clean a top

Indeed as we found when we also reached the spot it was something very different At the foot of a pretty big pine and involved in a green creeper which had even partly lifted some of the smaller bones a human skeleton lay, with a few shreds of clothing on the ground I believe a chill struck for a moment to every heart

He was a seaman said George Merry who bolder than the rest had gone up close, and was examining the rags of clothing Leastways this is good sea cloth

Ay ay said Silver like enough you wouldn't look to find a bishop here, I reckon But what sort of a way is that for bones to lie? Tain't in natur

Indeed on the second glance it seemed impossible to fancy that the body was in a natural position But for some disarray (the work perhaps of the birds that had fed upon him or of the slow growing creeper that had gradually enveloped his remains) the man lay perfectly straight—his feet pointing in one direction his hands raised above his head like a diver's pointing directly in the opposite

I've taken a notion into my old numskull observed Silver Here's the compass there's the tip top pint o' Skeleton Island stickin' out like a tooth Just take a bearing will you along the line of them bones

It was done The body pointed straight in the direction of the island, and the compass read duly ESE and by E

I thought so cried the cook, this here is a pint'ler Right up there is our line for the Pole Star and the jolly dollars But by thunder! if it don't make me cold inside to think of Flint This is one of his jokes and no mistakes Him and these six was alone here he killed 'em every man and this one he hauled here and laid down by compass shiver my timbers! They're long bones and the hair's been yellow Ay that would be Allardyce You mind Allardyce, Tom Morgan?

Ay ay returned Morgan 'I mind him he owed me money, he did and took my knife ashore with him

Speaking of knives said another why don't we find his n lying round? Flint warn't the man to pick a seaman's pocket and the birds I guess would leave it be

By the Powers and that's true! cried Silver

There ain't a thing left here said Merry still feeling round among the bones not a copper doit nor a baccy box It don't look natural to me'

No, by gum it don't, agreed Silver, not natural not nice says you Great

guns' messmates but if Flint was living this would be a hot spot for you and me Six they were and six are we and bones is what they are now

I saw him dead with these here dead lights said Morgan Billy took me in There he laid with penny-pieces on his eyes

Dead—ay sure enough he's dead and gone below said the fellow with the bandage but if ever sperrit walked it would be Flint's Dear heart but he died bad did Flint!

Ay that he did observed another 'now he raged and now he hollered for the rum and now he sang Fifteen Men were his only song mates and I tell you true I never rightly liked to hear it since It was main hot and the windy was open and I hear that old song comin out as clear as clear—and the death-haul on the man a ready

Come come said Silver stow this talk He's dead and he don't walk that I know leastways he won't walk by day and you may lay to that Care killed a cat Fetch ahead for the doubloons

We started certainly but in spite of the hot sun and staring daylight the pirates no longer ran separate and shouting through the wood but kept side by side and spoke with bated breath The terror of the dead buccaneer had fallen on their spirits

XXXII

THE TREASURE HUNT—THE VOICE AMONG THE TREES

PARTLY from the damping influence of this alarm partly to rest Silver and the sick folk the whole party sat down as soon as they had gained the brow of the ascent

The plateau being somewhat tilted towards the west this spot on which we had paused commanded a wide prospect on either hand Before us over the tree tops we beheld the Cape of the Woods fringed with surf behind we not only looked down upon the anchorage and Skeleton Island but saw—clear across the spit and the eastern lowlands—a great field of open sea upon the east Sheer above us rose the Spy glass here dotted with single pines there black with precipices There was no sound but that of the distant breakers mounting from all round and the chirp of countless insects in the brush Not a man not a sail upon the sea the very largeness of the view increased the sense of solitude

Silver as he sat took certain bearings with his compass

There are three tall trees said he about in the right line from Skeleton Island Spy glass Shoulder I take it means that lower pint there It's child's play to find the stuff now I've half a mind to dine first

I don't feel sharp growled Morgan Thinking o Flint—I think it were— as done me

Ah well my son you praise your stars he's dead' said Silver

He were an ugly devil cried a third pirate with a shudder, that blue in the face too'

"That was how the rum took him ' added Merry ' Blue' well I reckon he was blue That's a true word

Ever since they had found the skeleton and got upon this train of thought, they had spoken lower and lower and they had almost got to whispering by now so that the sound of their talk hardly interrupted the silence of the wood All of a sudden out of the middle of the trees in front of us a thin high, trembling voice struck up the well known air and words —

*"Fifteen men on The Dead Man's Chest—
Yo-ho ho, and a bottle of rum!"*

I have never seen men more dreadfully affected than the pirates The colour went from their six faces like enchantment some leaped to their feet some clawed hold of others Morgan grovelled on the ground

It's Flint by—' cried Merry

The song had stopped as suddenly as it began—broken off you would have said in the middle of a note as though someone had laid hand upon the singer's mouth Coming so far through the clear sunny atmosphere among the green tree tops I thought it had sounded airily and sweetly and the effect on my companions was the stranger

Come ' said Silver struggling with his ashen lips to get the word out 'this won't do Stand by to go about This is a rum start and I can't name the voice, but it's someone skylarking—someone that's flesh and blood and you may lay to that "

His courage had come back as he spoke and some of the colour to his face along with it Already the others had begun to lend an ear to his encouragement and were coming a little to themselves when the same voice broke out again—not this time singing but in a faint distant hail that echoed yet fainter among the clefts of the Spy glass

Darby M Graw it wailed—for that is the word that best describes the sound— Darby M Graw! Darby M Graw! again and again and again and then rising a little higher, and with an oath that I leave out Fetch aft the rum, Darby'

The buccaneers remained rooted to the ground their eyes starting from their heads Long after the voice had died away they still stared in silence, dreadfully before them

That fixes it' gasped one Let's go

They was his last words moaned Morgan 'his last words above board Dick had his Bible out and was praying volubly He had been well brought up, had Dick before he came to sea and fell among bid companions

Still Silver was unconquered I could hear his teeth rattle in his head, but he had not yet surrendered

Nobody in this here island ever heard of Darby he muttered 'not one but us that's here And then making a great effort Shipmates he cried 'I'm here to get that stuff and I'll not be beat by man nor devil I never was feared of Flint in his life and by the Powers I'll face him dead There's seven hundred thousand pound not a quarter of a mile from here When did ever

a gentleman o fortune show his stern to that much dollars for a boosy old seaman with a blue mug—and him dead too?

But there was no sign of re awakin.ng courage in his followers rather in-deed of growing terror at the irreverence of his words

Belay there John! said Merry Don't you cross a sperrit

And the rest were all too terrified to reply They would have run away sev-erally had they dared but fear kept them together and kept them close by John as if his daring helped them He on his part had pretty well fought hi weakness down

Sperrit? Well maybe he said But there's one thing not clear to me There was an echo Now no man ever seen a sperrit with a shadow well then what's he doing with an echo to him I should like to know? That am t in natur surely?

This argument seemed weak enough to me But you can never tell what will affect the superstitious and to my wonder George Merry was greatly re-lieved

Well that's so he said You've a head upon your shoulders John and no mistake Bout ship mates' this here crew is on a wrong tack I do believe And come to think on it it was like Flint's voice I grant you but not just so clear away like it after all It was liker somebody's else's voice now—it was liker—

By the Powers Ben Gunn! roared Silver

Ay and so it were cried Morgan springing on his knees Ben Gunn it were!

It don't make much odds do it now? asked Dick Ben Gunn's not here in the body any more n Flint

But the older hands greeted this remark with scorn

Why nobody minds Ben Gunn cried Merry dead or alive, nobody minds him

It was extraordinary how their spirits had returned and how the natural colour had revived in their faces Soon they were chatting together with inter-vals of listening and not long after hearing no further sound they shouldered the tools and set forth again Merry walking first with Silver's compass to keep them on the right line with Skeleton Island He had said the truth dead or alive nobody minded Ben Gunn

Dick alone still held his Bible and looked around him as he went with fearful glances but he found no sympathy and Silver even joked him on his precautions

I told you said he—I told you you had spiled your Bible If it ain't no good to swear by what do you suppose a sperrit would give for it? Not that! and he snapped his big fingers halting a moment on his crutch

But Dick was not to be comforted indeed it was soon plain to me that the lad was falling sick hastened by heat exhaustion and the shock of his alarm, the fever predicted by Doctor Livesey was evidently growing swiftly higher

It was fine open walking here upon the summit our way lay a little down-hill for as I have said the plateau tilted towards the west The pines great

and small grew wide apart and even between the clumps of nutmeg and azalea, wide open spaces baked in the hot sunshine Striking as we did, pretty n^o north west across the island we drew on the one hand even nearer under the shoulders of the Spy glass and on the other looked ever wider over that western bay where I had once tossed and trembled in the corac'e

The first of the tall trees was reached and by the bearing proved the wrong one So with the second The third rose nearly two hundred feet in the air above a clump of underwood a giant of a vegetable with a red column as big as a cottage and a wide shadow around in which a company could have manœuvred It was conspicuous far to sea both on the east and west and might have been entered as a sailing mark upon the charts

But it was not its size that now impressed my companions it was the knowledge that seven hundred thousand pounds in gold lay somewhere buried beneath its spreading shadow The thought of the money as they drew nearer swallowed up their previous terrors Their eyes burned in their heads their feet grew speedier and lighter their whole soul was bound up in that fortune that whole lifetime of extravagance and pleasure that lay waiting there for each of them

Silver hobbled grunting on his crutch his nostrils stood out and quivered he cursed like a madman when the flies settled on his hot and shiny countenance he plucked furiously at the line that held me to him and from time to time turned his eyes upon me with a deadly lool Certainly he took no pains to hide his thoughts and certainly I read them like print In the immediate nearness of the gold all else had been forgotten his promise and the doctor's warning were both things of the past and I could not doubt that he hoped to seize upon the treasure find and board the *Hispaniola* under cover of night cut every honest throat about that island and sail away as he had at first intended, laden with crimes and riches

Shaken as I was with these alarms it was hard for me to keep up with the rapid pace of the treasure hunters Now and again I stumbled and it was then that Silver plucked so roughly at the rope and launched at me his murderous glances Dick who had dropped behind us and now brought up the rear, was babbling to himself both prayers and curses as his fever kept rising This also added to my wretchedness and to crown all I was haunted by the thought of the tragedy that had once been acted on that plateau when that ungodly buccaneer with the blue face—he who died at Savannah singing and shouting for drink—had there with his own hand cut down his six accomplices This grove that was now so peaceful must then have rung with cries I thought, and even with the thought I could believe I heard it ringing still

We were now at the margin of the thicket

'Huzza, mates, altogether' shouted Merry, and the foremost broke into a run

And suddenly not ten yards further we beheld them stop A low cry arose Silver doubled his pace digging away with the foot of his crutch like one possessed and the next moment he and I had come also to a dead halt

Before us was a great excavation not very recent for the sides had fallen in and grass had sprouted on the bottom In this were the shaft of a pick broken

in two and the boards of several packing cases strewn around On one of these boards I saw branded with a hot iron the name *Walrus*—the name of Flint's sh.p

All was clear to probation The *cache* had been found and rifled the seven hundred thousand pounds were gone!

XXXIII

THE FALL OF A CHIEFTAIN

THERE NEVER was such an overturn in this world Each of these six men wa as though he had been struck But with Silver the blow passed almost instantly Every thought of his soul had been set full stretch like a racer on that money we'll he was brought up in a single second dead and he kept his head found his temper and changed his plan before the others had had time to realise the disappointment

Jim he whispered take that and stand by for trouble
And he passed me a double barrelled pistol

At the same time he began quietly moving northward and in a few steps had put the hollow between us and the other five Then he looked at me and nodded as much as to say Here is a narrow corner as indeed I thought it was His looks were now quite friendly and I was so revolted at these constant changes that I could not forbear whispering So you've changed sides again

There was no time left for him to answer in The buccaneers with oaths and cries began to leap one after another into the pit and to dig with their fingers throwing the boards aside as they did so Morgan found a piece of gold He held it up with a perfect spout of oaths It was a two guinea piece, and it went from hand to hand among them for a quarter of a minute

Two guineas! roared Merry shaking it at Silver That's your seven hundred thousand pounds is it? You're the man for bargains ain't you? You're him that never bungled nothing you wooden headed lubber!

Dig away boys said Silver with the coolest insolence you'll find some pig nuts and I shouldn't wonder

Pig nuts! repeated Merry in a scream Mates do you hear that? I tell you now that man there knew it all along Look in the face of him and you'll see it wrote there

Ah Merry remarked Silver standing for cap'n again? You're a pushing lad to be sure

But this time everyone was entirely in Merry's favour They began to scramble out of the excavation darting furious glances behind them One thing I observed which looked well for us they all got out upon the opposite side from Silver

Well there we stood two on one side five on the other the pit between us and nobody screwed up high enough to offer the first blow Silver never moved he watched them very upright on his crutch and looked as cool as ever I saw him He was brave and no mistake

At last, Merry seemed to think a speech might help matters

'Mates' says he, there's two of them alone there, one's the old cripple that brought us all here and blundered us down to this the other's that cub that I mean to have the heart of Now mates—

He was raising his arm and his voice and plainly meant to lead a charge, But just then—crack! crack! crack!—three musket shots flashed out of the thicket Merry tumbled head foremost into the excavation the man with the bandage spun round like a teetotum and fell all his length upon his side, where he lay dead but still twitching, and the other three turned and ran for it with all their might

Before you could wink Long John had fired two barrels of a pistol into the struggling Merry and as the man rolled up his eyes at him in the last agony, George, said he 'I reckon I settled you

At the same moment the doctor Gray and Ben Gunn joined us with smok ing muskets from among the nutmeg trees

Forward! cried the doctor Double quick my lads We must head em off the boats

And we set off, at a great pace sometimes plunging through the bushes to the chest

I tell you but Silver was anxious to keep up with us The work that man went through leaping on his crutch till the muscles of his chest were fit to burst was work no sound man ever equalled and so thinks the doctor As it was, he was already thirty yards behind us and on the verge of strangling, when we reached the brow of the slope

Doctor he hailed see there! no hurry!

Sure enough there was no hurry In a more open part of the plateau, we could see the three survivors still running in the same direction as they had started right for Mizzen-mast Hill We were already between them and the boats and so we four sat down to breathe while Long John mopping his face came slowly up with us

Thank ye kindly doctor says he You came in in about the nick I guess for me and Hawkins And so it's you Ben Gunn' he added Well, you're a nice one to be sure

I'm Ben Gunn I am replied the maroon wriggling like an eel in his embarrassment And he added after a long pause how do, Mr Silver Pretty well I thank ye says you

'Ben Ben murmured Silver to think as you've done me'

The doctor sent back Gray for one of the pickaxes deserted in their flight by the mutineers and then as we proceeded leisurely down hill to where the boats were lying related in a few words what had taken place It was a story that profoundly interested Silver and Ben Gunn the half idiot maroon was the hero from beginning to end

Ben in his long lonely wanderings about the island had found the skeleton—it was he that had rifled it he had found the treasure he had dug it up (it was the haft of his pickaxe that lay broken in the excavation) he had carried it on his back, in many weary journeys, from the foot of a tall pine to a cave

he had on the two pointed hill at the north east angle of the island there it had lain stored in safety since two months before the arrival of the *Hispaniola*

When the doctor had wormed this secret from him on the afternoon of the attack and when next morning he saw the anchorage deserted he had gone to Silver given him the chart which was now useless—given him the stores for Ben Gunn's cave was well supplied with goats meat salted by himself—given anything and everything to get a chance of moving in safety from the stockade to the two pointed hill there to be clear of malaria and keep a guard upon the money

As for you Jim" he said 'it went against my heart but I did what I thought best for those who had stood by their duty, and if you were not one of these whose fault was it'

That morning finding that I was to be involved in the horrid disappointment he had prepared for the mutineers he had run all the way to the cave, and leaving squire to guard the captain had taken Gray and the maroon, and started making the diagonal across the island to be at hand beside the pine Soon however, he saw that our party had the start of him and Ben Gunn being fleet of foot had been despatched in front to do his best alone Then it had occurred to him to work upon the superstitions of his former shipmates and he was so far successful that Gray and the doctor had come up and were already ambushed before the arrival of the treasure hunters

Ah said Silver it were fortunate for me that I had Hawkins here You would have let old John be cut to bits and never given it a thought, doctor

Not a thought replied Doctor Livesey cheerily

And by this time we had reached the gigs The doctor with the pickaxe, demolished one of them and then we all got aboard the other and set out to go round by sea for North Inlet

This was a run of eight or nine miles Silver though he was almost killed already with fatigue was set to an oar like the rest of us and we were soon skimming swiftly over a smooth sea Soon we passed out of the straits and doubled the south east corner of the island round which, four days ago, we had towed the *Hispaniola*

As we passed the two pointed hill we could see the black mouth of Ben Gunn's cave and a figure standing by it leaning on a musket It was the squire and we waved a handkerchief and gave him three cheers in which the voice of Silver joined as heartily as any

Three miles farther just inside the mouth of North Inlet what should we meet but the *Hispaniola*, cruising by herself! The last flood had lifted her and had there been much wind or a strong tide current, as in the southern anchorage we should never have found her more or found her stranded beyond help As it was there was little amiss beyond the wreck of the main-sail Another anchor was got ready and dropped in a fathom and a half of water We all pulled round again to Rum Cove the nearest point for Ben Gunn's treasure house and then Gray single-handed returned with the gig to the *Hispaniola*, where he was to pass the night on guard

A gentle slope ran up from the beach to the entrance of the cave At the top,

the squire met us To me he was cordial and kind saying nothing of my escapade either in the way of blame or praise At Silver's polite salute he somewhat flushed

John Silver he said you're a prodigious villain and impostor—a monstrous impostor sir I am told I am not to prosecute you Well then I will not But the dead men sir hang about your neck like millstones

Thank you kindly sir replied Long John again saluting

I dare you to thank me! cried the squire It is a gross dereliction of my duty Stand back

And thereupon we all entered the cave It was a large airy place with a little spring and a pool of clear water overhung with ferns The floor was sand Before a big fire lay Captain Smollett and in a far corner, only dimly flickered over by the blaze I beheld great heaps of coin and quadrilaterals built of bars of gold That was Flint's treasure that we had come so far to seek and that had cost already the lives of seventeen men from the *Hispaniola* How many it had cost in the amassing what blood and sorrow what good ships scuttled on the deep what brave men walking the plank blindfold what shot of cannon what shame and lies and cruelty perhaps no man alive could tell Yet there were still three upon that island Silver and old Morgan and Ben Gunn—who had each taken his share in these crimes as each had hoped in vain to share in the reward

Come in Jim said the captain You're a good boy in your line Jim but I don't think you and me'll go to sea again You're too much of the born favourite for me Is that you John Silver? What brings you here man?

Come back to my dooty sir returned Silver

Ah! said the captain and that was all he said

What a supper I had of it that night with all my friends around me and what a meal it was with Ben Gunn's salted goat and some delicacies and a bottle of old wine from the *Hispaniola*! Never I am sure were people gayer or happier And there was Silver sitting back almost out of the firelight but eating heartily prompt to spring forward when anything was wanted even joining quietly in our laughter—the same bland polite obsequious seaman of the voyage out

XXIV

AND LAST

THE NEXT MORNING we fell early to work for the transportation of this great mass of gold near a mile by land to the beach, and thence three miles by boat to the *Hispaniola*, was a considerable task for so small a number of workmen. The three fellows still abroad upon the island did not greatly trouble us a single sentry on the shoulder of the hill was sufficient to ensure us against any sudden onslaught and we thought besides they had had more than enough of fighting

Therefore the work was pushed on briskly Gray and Ben Gunn came and

went with the boat while the rest during their absences piled treasure on the beach Two of the bars slung in a rope's end made a good load for a grown man—one that he was glad to walk slowly with For my part as I was not much use at carrying I was kept busy all day in the cave packing the minted money into bread bags

It was a strange collection like Billy Bones's hoard for the diversity of coinage but so much larger and so much more varied that I think I never had more pleasure than in sorting them English French Spanish Portuguese Georges and Louises doubloons and double guineas and moidores and sequins the pictures of all the kings of Europe for the last hundred years strange Oriental pieces stamped with what looked like wisps of string or bits of spider's web round pieces and square pieces and pieces bored through the middle as if to wear them round your neck—nearly every variety of money in the world must I think have found a place in that collection and for number I am sure they were like autumn leaves so that my back ached with stooping and my fingers with sorting them out

Day after day this work went on by every evening a fortune had been stowed aboard but there was another fortune waiting for the morrow and all this time we heard nothing of the three surviving mutineers

At last—I think it was on the third night—the doctor and I were strolling on the shoulder of the hill where it overlooks the lowlands of the isle when from out of the thick darkness below the wind brought us a noise between shrieking and singing It was only a snatch that reached our ears followed by the former silence

Heaven forgive them said the doctor tis the mutineers!

All drunk sir struck in the voice of Silver from behind us

Silver I should say was allowed his entire liberty and in spite of daily rebuffs seemed to regard himself once more as quite a privileged and friendly dependant Indeed it was remarkable how well he bore these slights and with what unwearying politeness he kept on trying to ingratiate himself with all Yet I think, none treated him better than a dog unless it was Ben Gunn who was still terribly afraid of his old quartermaster or myself who had really something to thank him for although for that matter I suppose I had reason to think even worse of him than anybody else for I had seen him meditating a fresh treachery upon the plateau Accordingly it was pretty gruffy that the doctor answered him

Drunk or raving said he

Right you were sir replied Silver and precious little odds which, to you and me'

I suppose you would hardly ask me to call you a humane man returned the doctor with a sneer and so my feelings may surprise you Master Silver But if I were sure they were raving—as I am morally certain one at least, of them is down with fever—I should leave this camp and at whatever risk to my own carcase take them the assistance of my skill

Ask your pardon sir you would be very wrong quoth Silver You would lose your precious life and you may lay to that I'm on your side now, hand

and glove and I shouldn't wish for to see the party weakened let alone your self seeing as I know what I owes you But these men down there they couldn't keep their word—no not supposing they wished to and what's more they couldn't believe as you could

No said the doctor You're the man to keep your word we know that

Well that was about the last news we had of the three pirates Only once we heard a gunshot a great way off and supposed them to be hunting A council was held and it was decided that we must desert them on the island—to the huge glee I must say of Ben Gunn and with the strong approval of Gray We left a good stock of powder and shot the bulk of the salt goat a few medicines, and some other necessaries tools clothing a spare sail a fathom or two of rope and by the particular desire of the doctor a handsome present of tobacco

That was about our last doing on the island Before that we had got the treasure stowed and had shipped enough water and the remainder of the goat meat in case of any distress and at last one fine morning we weighed anchor which was about all that we could manage and stood out of North Inlet the same colours flying that the captain had flown and fought under at the palisade

The three fellows must have been watching us closer than we thought for as we soon had proved For coming through the narrows we had to lie very near the southern point and there we saw all three of them kneeling together on a spit of sand with their arms raised in supplication It went to all our hearts I think to leave them in that wretched state but we could not risk another mutiny and to take them home for the gibbet would have been a cruel sort of kindness The doctor hailed them and told them of the stores we had left and where they were to find them But they continued to call us by name and appeal to us for God's sake to be merciful and not leave them to die in such a place

At last seeing the ship still bore on her course and was now swiftly drawing out of earshot one of them—I know not which it was—leapt to his feet with a hoarse cry whipped his musket to his shoulder and sent a shot whistling over Silver's head and through the main sail

After that we kept under cover of the bulwarks and when next I looked out they had disappeared from the spit and the spit itself had almost melted out of sight in the growing distance That was at least the end of that and before noon to my inexpressible joy, the highest rock of Treasure Island had sunk into the blue round of sea

We were so short of men that everyone on board had to bear a hand—only the captain lying on a mattress in the stern and giving his orders for though greatly recovered he was still in want of quiet We laid her head for the nearest port in Spanish America for we could not risk the voyage without fresh hands and as it was what with baffling winds and a couple of fresh gales, we were all worn out before we reached it

It was just at sundown when we cast anchor in a most beautiful land locked gulf and were immediately surrounded by shore boats full of negroes and Mexican Indian, and half-bloods, selling fruits and vegetables and offering to

dive for bits of money The sight of so many good humoured faces (especially the blacks) the taste of the tropical fruits and above all the lights that began to shine in the town made a most charming contrast to our dark and bloody sojourn on the island, and the doctor and the squire taking me along with them went ashore to pass the early part of the night Here they met the captain of an English man of-war fell in talk with him went on board his ship and in short had so agreeable a time that day was breaking when we came alongside the *Hispaniola*

Ben Gunn was on deck alone and as soon as we came on board, he began with wonderful contortions to make us a confession Silver was gone The maroon had connived at his escape in a shore boat some hours ago and he now assured us he had only done so to preserve our lives which would certainly have been forfeit if that man with the one leg had stayed aboard ' But this was not all The seacock had not gone empty handed He had cut through a bulkhead unobserved and had removed one of the sacks of coin, worth, perhaps three or four hundred guineas to help him on his further wanderings

I think we were all pleased to be so cheaply quit of him

Well to make a long story short we got a few hands on board made a good cruise home and the *Hispaniola* reached Bristol just as Mr Blandly was beginning to think of fitting out her consort Five men only of those who had sailed returned with her Drink and the devil had done for the rest with a vengeance, although to be sure we were not quite in so bad a case as that other ship they sang about

"With one man of her crew alive
What put to sea with seventy-five '

All of us had an ample share of the treasure and used it wisely or foolishly according to our natures Captain Smollett is now retired from the sea Gray not only saved his money but being suddenly smit with the desire to rise also studied his profession and he is now mate and part owner of a fine full rigged ship married besides and the father of a family As for Ben Gunn he got a thousand pounds which he spent or lost in three weeks or to be more exact in nineteen days for he was back begging on the twentieth Then he was given a lodge to keep exactly as he had feared upon the island and he still lives a great favourite though something of a butt with the country boys, and a notable singer in church on Sundays and saints days

Of Silver we have heard no more That formidable seafaring man with one leg has at last gone clean out of my life but I daresay he met his old negress, and perhaps still lives in comfort with her and Captain Flint It is to be hoped so I suppose for his chances of comfort in another world are very small

The bar silver and the arms still lie for all that I know where Flint buried them and certainly they shall lie there for me Oxen and wain-ropes would not bring me back again to that accursed island and the worst dreams that ever I have are when I hear the surf booming about its coasts or start upright in bed with the sharp voice of Captain Flint still ringing in my ears ' Pieces of eight' pieces of eight'

KIDNAPPED

Being Memoirs of the Adventures of David Balfour in the Year 1751

I

I SET OFF UPON MY JOURNEY TO THE HOUSE OF SHAWS

I WILL BEGIN the story of my adventures with a certain morning early in the month of June the year of grace 1751 when I took the key for the last time out of the door of my father's house. The sun began to shine upon the summit of the hills as I went down the road and by the time I had come as far as the manse the blackbirds were whistling in the garden lilacs and the mist that hung around the valley in the time of the dawn was beginning to arise and die away.

Mr Campbell the minister of Essendean was waiting for me by the garden gate good man! He asked me if I had breakfasted and hearing that I lacked for nothing, he took my hand in both of his and clapped it kindly under his arm.

'Well Davie lad,' said he, 'I will go with you as far as the ford to set you on the way.'

And we began to walk forward in silence.

'Are ye sorry to leave Essendean?' said he after a while.

'Why sir,' said I, 'if I knew where I was going or what was likely to become of me I would tell you candidly. Essendean is a good place indeed and I have been very happy there but then I have never been anywhere else. My father and mother since they are both dead I shall be no nearer to in Essendean than in the kingdom of Hungary and to speak truth if I thought I had a chance to better myself where I was going I would go with a good will.'

'Ay,' said Mr Campbell, 'Very well Davie. Then it behooves me to tell your fortune or so far as I may. When your mother was gone and your father (the worthy Christian man) began to sicken for his end he gave me in charge a certain letter which he said was your inheritance. So soon says he as I am gone and the house is redd up and the gear disposed of (all which Davie hath been done) give my boy this letter into his hand and start him off to the house of Shaws not far from Cramond. That is the place I came from,' he said, 'and it's where it befits that my boy should return. He is a steady lad,' your father said, 'and a canny goer, and I doubt not he will come safe, and be well liked where he goes.'

'The house of Shaws!' I cried. 'What had my poor father to do with the house of Shaws?'

'Nay,' said Mr Campbell, 'who can tell that for a surety? But the name of that family, Davie boy is the name you bear—Balfour of Shaws an ancient, honest, reputable house, peradventure in these latter days decayed. Your father, too, was a man of learning as beffited his position no man more

plausibly conducted school nor had he the manner or the speech of a common dominie but (as ye will yourself remember) I took aye a pleasure to have him to the manse to meet the gentry and those of my own house Campbell of Kilrennet Campbell of Dunswire Campbell of Minch and others all well-kenned gentlemen had pleasure in his society Lastly to put all the elements of this affair before you here is the testamentary letter itself, superscribed by the own hand of our departed brother

He gave me the letter, which was addressed in these words "To the hands of Ebenezer Balfour Esq of Shaws in his house of Shaws these will be delivered by my son David Balfour My heart was beating hard at this great prospect now suddenly opening before a lad of seventeen years of age, the son of a poor country dominie in the Forest of Ettrick

Mr Campbell I stammered and if you were in my shoes would you go?"

'Of a surety said the minister that would I, and without pause A pretty lad like you should get to Cramond (which is near in by Edinburgh) in two days of walk If the worst came to the worst and your high relations (as I cannot but suppose them to be somewhat of your blood) should put you to the door ye can but walk the two days back again and risp at the manse door But I would rather hope that ye shall be well received as your poor father forecast for you and for anything that I ken come to be a great man in time And here Davie laddie he resumed it lies near upon my conscience to improve this parting and set you on the right guard against the dangers of the world

Here he cast about for a comfortable seat lighted on a big boulder under a birch by the trackside sate down upon it with a very long serious upper lip, and the sun now shining in upon us between two peaks put his pocket-hand-kerchief over his cocked hat to shelter him There then with uplifted forefinger he first put me on my guard against a considerable number of here sins to which I had no temptation and urged upon me to be instant in my prayers and reading of the Bible That done he drew a picture of the great house that I was bound to and how I should conduct my self with its inhabitants

Be soople Davie in things immaterial" said he Bear ye this in mind, that though gentle born ye have had a country raising Dinnae shame us Davie dinnae shame us! In yon great muckle house with all these domestics upper and under show yourself as nice as circumspect as quick at the conception and as slow of speech as any As for the laird—remember he's the laird I say no more honour to whom honour It's a pleasure to obey a laird or should be to the young

Well sir said I it may be and I'll promise you I'll try to make it so

Why very well said replied Mr Campbell heartily And now to come to the material or (to make a quibble) to the immaterial I have here a little packet which contains four things He tugged it as he spoke with some great difficulty from the skirt pocket of his coat Of these four things the first is your legal due the little pickle money for your father's books and plen ishing which I have bought (as I have explained from the first) in the design

of re selling at a profit to the incoming dominie The other three are gifties that Mrs Campbell and myself would be blithe of your acceptance The first, which is round, will likely please ye best at the first offgo but O Davie laddie it's but a drop of water in the sea it'll help you but a step and vanish like the morning The second which is flat and square and written upon will stand by you through life like a good staff for the road and a good pillow to your head in sickness And as for the last which is cubical that'll see you it's my prayerful wish into a better land

With that he got upon his feet took off his hat and prayed a little while aloud and in affecting terms for a young man setting out into the world then suddenly took me in his arms and embraced me very hard then held me at arm's length looking at me with his face all working with sorrow, and then whipped about and crying good bye to me set off backward by the way that we had come at a sort of jogging run It might have been laughable to another, but I was in no mind to laugh I watched him as long as he was in sight, and he never stopped hurrying nor once looked back Then it came in upon my mind that this was all his sorrow at my departure and my conscience smote me hard and fast because I for my part was overjoyed to get away out of that quiet countryside and go to a great busy house among rich and respected gentlefolk of my own name and blood

Davie Davie I thought was ever seen such a black ingratitude? Can you forget old favours and old friends at the mere whistle of a name? Fie fie think shame!

And I sat down on the boulder the good man had just left and opened the parcel to see the nature of my gifts That which he had called cubicle I had never much doubt of sure enough it was a little Bible to carry in a plaidneuk That which he had called round I found to be a shilling piece and the third which was to help me so wonderfully both in health and sickness all the days of my life was a little piece of coarse yellow paper written upon thus in red ink —

To MAKE LILLY OF THE VALLEY WATER Take the flowers of lilly of the valley and distil them in a sack and drink a spoonful or two as there is occasion It restores speec't to those who have the dumb palsey It is good against the Gout it comforts the heart and strengthens the memory and the flowers put into a Glasse close stopt, and set into ane hill of ants for a month then take it out and you will find a liquor which comes from the flowers which I eep in a vial it is good ill or well and whether man or woman

And then in the minister's own hand was added

Likewise for sprains rub it in and for the cholic a great spoonful in the hour

To be sure I laughed over this but it was rather tremulous laughter and I was glad to get my bundle on my staff's end and set out over the ford and up the hill upon the farther side till just as I came on the green drove-road running wide through the heather I took my last look at Kirk Essendean,

the trees about the manse and the big rowans in the kirkyard where my father and my mother lay

II

I COME TO MY JOURNEY'S END

ON THE AFTERNOON of the second day coming to the top of a hill I saw all the country fall away before me down to the sea and in the midst of this descent on a long ridge the city of Edinburgh smoking like a kiln There was a flag upon the castle and ships moving or lying anchored in the firth both of which for as far away as they were I could distinguish clearly and both brought my country heart into my mouth

Presently after I came by a house where a shepherd lived and got a rough direction for the neighborhood of Cramond and so from one to another worked my way to the westward of the capital by Colinton till I came out upon the Glasgow road And there to my great pleasure and wonder I beheld a regiment marching to the fifes every foot in time an old red faced general on a grey horse at the one end and at the other the company of Grenadiers with their Pope's hats The pride of life seemed to mount into my brain at the sight of the red coats and the hearing of that merry music

A little farther on and I was told I was in Cramond parish and began to substitute in my inquiries the name of the house of Shaws It was a word that seemed to surprise those of whom I sought my way At first I thought the plainness of my appearance in my country habit and that all dusty from the road consorted ill with the greatness of the place to which I was bound But after two or maybe three had given me the same look and the same answer I began to take it in my head there was something strange about the Shaws itself

The better to set this fear at rest I changed the form of my inquiries and spying an honest fellow coming along a lane on the shaft of his cart I asked him if he had ever heard tell of a house they called the house of Shaws

He stopped his cart and looked at me, like the others

Ay said he What for?

'It's a great house' I asked

'Doubtless says he The house is a big, muckle house

Ay said I but the folk that are in it?

'Folk' cried he Are ye daft? There's nae folk there—to call folk"

What? says I 'not Mr Ebenezer?

Ou ay says the man there's the laird to be sure if it's him you're wanting What'll like be your business mannie?

I was led to think that I would get a position, I said looking as modest as I could

What? cried the carter in so sharp a note that his very horse started and then Well mannie he added it's nae of my affairs but ye seem a decent-spoken lad and if ye'll take a word from me ye'll keep clear of the Shaws

The next person I came across was a dapper little man in a beautiful white

wig, whom I saw to be a barber on his rounds and knowing well that barbers were great gossips I asked him plainly what sort of a man was Mr Balfour of the Shaws

‘Hoot hoot hoot’ said the barber ‘nae kind of a man nae kind of a man at all and began to ask me very shrewdly what my business was but I was more than a match for him at that and he went on to his next customer no wiser than he came

I cannot well describe the blow this dealt to my illusions The more indistinct the accusations were the less I liked them for they left the wider field to fancy What kind of a great house was this that all the parish should start and stare to be asked the way to it? or what sort of a gentleman that his ill fame should be thus current on the wayside? If an hour's walking would have brought me back to Essendean I had left my adventure then and there and returned to Mr Campbell's But when I had come so far a way already mere shame would not suffer me to desist till I had put the matter to the touch of proof I was bound out of self respect to carry it through and little as I liked the sound of what I heard and slow as I began to travel I still kept asking my way and still kept advancing

It was drawing on to sundown when I met a stout dark sour looking woman coming trudging down a hill and she when I had put my usual question turned sharp about accompanied me back to the summit she had just left and pointed to a great bulk of building standing very bare upon a green in the bottom of the next valley The country was pleasant round about running in low hills pleasantly watered and wooded and the crops to my eyes wonderfully good but the house itself appeared to be a kind of ruin no road led up to it no smoke arose from any of the chimneys nor was there any semblance of a garden My heart sank That? I cried

The woman's face lit up with malignant anger That is the house of Shaws! she cried Blood built it blood stopped the building of it blood shall bring it down See here! she cried again— I spit upon the ground and crack my thumb at it! Black be its fall! If ye see the laird tell him what ye hear tell him this makes the twelve hunner and nineteen time that Jennet Clouston has called down the curse on him and on his house byre and stable man guest and master wife miss or bairn—black blacl be their fall!

And the woman whose voice had risen to a kind of eldritch sing song turned with a skip and was gone I stood where she left me with my hair on end In those day's folks still believed in witches and trembled at a curse and this one falling so pat like a wayside omen to arrest me ere I carried out my purpose took the pith out of my legs

I sat me down and stared at the house of Shaws The more I looled the pleasanter that country side appeared being all set with hawthorn bushes full of flowers the fields dotted with sheep a fine flight of rooks in the sky and every sign of a kind soil and climate and yet the barrack in the midst of it went sore against my fancy

Country folk went by from the fields as I sat there on the side of the ditch, but I lacked the spirit to give them a good even At last the sun went down,

and then right up against the yellow sky I saw a scroll of smoke go mounting not much thicker as it seemed to me than the smoke of a candle but still there it was and meant a fire and warmth and cookery and some living inhabitant that must have lit it and this comforted my heart

So I set forward by a little faint track in the grass that led in my direction It was very faint indeed to be the only way to a place of habitation yet I saw no other Presently it brought me to stone uprights with an unroofed lodge beside them and coats of arms upon the top A main entrance it was plainly meant to be but never finished, instead of gates of wrought iron a pair of hurdles were tied across with a straw rope and as there were no park walls nor any sign of avenue the track that I was following passed on the right hand of the pillars and went wandering on toward the house

The nearer I got to that the drearier it appeared It seemed like the one wing of the house that had never been finished What should have been the inner end stood open on the upper floors and showed against the sky with steps and stairs of uncompleted masonry Many of the windows were unglazed and bats flew in and out like doves out of a dove cote

The night had begun to fall as I got close and in three of the lower windows which were very high up and narrow and well barred the changing light of a little fire began to glimmer

Was this the place I had been coming to? Was it within these walls that I was to seek new friends and begin great fortunes? Why in my father's house on Esson Waterside the fire and the bright lights would show a mile away and the door open to a beggar's knock!

I came forward cautiously and giving ear as I came heard someone rattling with dishes and a little dry eager cough that came in fits but there was no sound of speech and not a dog barked

The door as well as I could see it in the dim light was a great piece of wood all studded with nails and I lifted my hand with a faint heart under my jacket and knocked once Then I stood and waited The house had fallen into a dead silence a whole minute passed away and nothing stirred but the bats overhead I knocked again and hearkened again By this time my ears had grown so accustomed to the quiet that I could hear the ticking of the clock inside as it slowly counted out the seconds but whoever was in that house kept deadly still and must have held his breath

I was in two minds whether to run away but anger got the upper hand and I began instead to rain kicks and buffets on the door and to shout out aloud for Mr Balfour I was in full career when I heard the cough right overhead and jumping back and looking up beheld a man's head in a tall nightcap and the bell mouth of a blunderbuss at one of the first storey windows

It's loaded said a voice

I have come here with a letter ' I said to Mr Ebenezer Balfour of Shaws. Is he here?

From whom is it? asked the man with the blunderbuss

That is neither here nor there said I for I was growing very wroth

"Well," was the reply "ye can put it down upon the doorstep and be off with ye"

I will do no such thing I cried I will deliver i into Mr Balfours hands, as it was meant I should It is a letter of introduction

A what? cried the voice sharply I repeated what I had said

Who are ye yourself? was the next question after a considerable pause I am not ashamed of my name said I They call me David Balfour

At that I made sure the man started for I heard the blunderbuss rattle on the windowsill and it was after quite a long pause and with a curious change of voice that the next question followed

Is your father dead?

I was so much surprised at this that I could find no voice to answer, but stood staring

Ay the man resumed he ll be dead no doubt and that ll be what brings ye chapping to my door Another pause and then defiantly Well, man, he said I'll let ye in and he disappeared from the window

III

I MAKE ACQUAINTANCE OF MY UNCLE

PRESENTLY there came a great rattling of chains and bolts and the door was cautiously opened and shut to again behind me as soon as I had passed

Go into the kitchen and touch naething said the voice and while the person of the house set himself to replacing the defences of the door I groped my way forward and entered the kitchen

The fire had burned up fairly bright and showed me the barest room I think I ever put my eyes on Half a dozen dishes stood upon the shelves the table was laid for supper with a bowl of porridge a horn spoon and a cup of small beer Besides what I have named there was not another thing in that great, stone vaulted empty chamber but locl fast chests arranged along the wall and a corner cupboard with a padlock

As soon as the last chain was up the man rejoined me He was a mean stooping narrow shouldered clay faced creature and his age might have been anything between fifty and seventy His nightcap was of flannel and so was the nightgown that he wore instead of coat and waistcoat over his ragged shirt He was long unshaved but what most distressed and even daunted me he would neither take his eyes away from me nor look me fairly in the face What he was whether by trade or birth was more than I could fathom but he seemed most like an old unprofitable serving man who should have been left in charge of that big house upon board wages

Are ye sharp set? he asked glancing at about the level of my knee.
'Ye can eat that drop parrich?'

I said I feared it was his own supper

"O said he I can do fine wantin' it I'll take the ale though, for n

clockens* my cough He drank the cup about half out still keeping an eye upon me as he drank and then suddenly held out his hand Let s see the letter said he

I told him the letter was for Mr Balfour not for him

And who do you think I am? says he Give me Alexander s letter!

‘You know my father s name?’

It would be strange if I dinnae he returned for he was my born brother, and little as ye seem to like either me or my house or my good parritch I m your born uncle Davie my man and you my born nephew So give us the letter and sit down and fill your kyte

If I had been some years younger what with shame weariness and disappointment I believe I had burst into tears As it was I could find no words neither black nor white but handed him the letter and sat down to the porridge with as little appetite for meat as ever a young man had

Meanwhile my uncle stooping over the fire turned the letter over and over in his hands

Do ye ken what s in it? he asked suddenly

‘You see for yourself sir said I that the seal has not been broken’

“Ay said he but what brought you here?

To give the letter said I

No said he cunningly but ye ll have had some hopes nae doubt?

‘I confess sir said I when I was told that I had kinsfolk well to do I did indeed indulge the hope that they might help me in my life But I am no beggar I look for no favours at your hands and I want none that are not freely given For as poor as I appear I have friends of my own that will be blithe to help me

Hoot toot! said Uncle Ebenezer, ‘dinnae fly up in the snuff at me Well agree fine yet And Davie my man, if you re done with that bit parritch I could just take a sup of it myself Ay he continued as soon as he had ousted me from the stool and spoon they re fine halesome food—they re grand food parritch He murmured a little grace to himself and fell to

Your father was very fond of his meat I mind he was a hearty, if not a great eater but as for me I could never do mair than pyke at food He took a pull at the small beer which probably reminded him of hospitable duties for his next speech ran thus If ye re dry ye ll find water behind the door

To this I returned no answer standing stiffly on my two feet and looking down upon my uncle with a mighty angry heart He on his part, continued to eat like a man under some pressure of time and to throw out little darting glances now at my shoes and now at my home spun stockings Once only when he had ventured to look a little higher our eyes met and no thief taken with a hand in a man s pockets could have shown more lively signals of distress This set me in a muse whether his timidity arose from too long a disuse of any human company and whether perhaps upon a little trial it might pass off,

*Moistors

and my uncle change into an altogether different man From this I was awakened by his sharp voice

Your father's been long dead? he asked

Three weeks sir said I

He was a secret man Alexander—a secret silent man he continued He never said muckle when he was young Hell never have spoken muckle of me?

I never knew sir till you told it me yourself that he had any brother

Dear me dear me! said Ebenezer Nor yet of Shaws I daresay?

'Not so much as the name sir said I

To think o that! said he A strange nature of a man! For all that he seemed singularly satisfied but whether with himself or me or with this conduct of my father's was more than I could read Certainly however he seemed to be outgrowing that distaste or ill wind that he had conceived at first against my person for presently he jumped up came across the room behind me and hit me a smack upon the shoulder We'll agree fine yet! he cried 'I'm just as glad I let you in And now come awa to your bed

To my surprise he lit no lamp or candle but set forth into the dark passage groped his way breathing deeply up a flight of steps and paused before a door which he unlocked I was close upon his heels having stumbled after him as best I might and then he bade me go in for that was my chamber I did as he bid but paused after a few steps and begged a light to go to bed with

'Hoot toot! said Uncle Ebenezer there's a fine moon

'Neither moon nor star sir and pitmirk * said I I cannae see the bed'

Hoot toot hoot toot! said he Lights in a house is a thing I dinnae agree with I'm unco feared of fires Good night to ye Davie my man And before I had time to add a further protest he pulled the door to and I heard him lock me in from the outside

I did not know whether to laugh or cry The room was as cold as a well, and the bed when I found my way to it as damp as a peat hag but by good fortune I had caught up my bundle and my plaid and rolling myself in the latter I lay down upon the floor under the lee of the big bedstead and fell speedily asleep

With the first peep of day I opened my eyes to find myself in a great chamber hung with stamped leather furnished with fine embroidered furniture and lit by three fair windows Ten years ago or perhaps twenty it must have been as pleasant a room to lie down or awake in as a man could wish, but damp dirt disuse and the mice and spiders had done their worst since then Many of the window panes besides were broken and indeed this was so common a feature in that house that I believe my uncle must at some time have stood a siege from his indignant neighbours—perhaps with Jennet Clouston at their head

Meanwhile the sun was shining outside, and being very cold in that mis-

*Dark as the pit.

erable room I knocked and shouted till my gaoler came and let me out He carried me to the back of the house where was a draw well and told me to wash my face there if I wanted and when that was done I made the best of my way back to the kitchen where he had lit the fire and was making the porridge The table was laid with two bowls and two horn spoons but the same single measure of small beer Perhaps my eye rested on this particular with some surprise and perhaps my uncle observed it for he spoke up as if in answer to my thought, asking me if I would like to drink ale—for so he called it

I told him such was my habit but not to put himself about

Na na said he I'll deny you nothing in reason

He fetched another cup from the shelf and then to my great surprise, instead of drawing more beer he poured an accurate half from one cup to the other There was a kind of nobleness in this that took my breath away if my uncle was certainly a miser he was one of that thorough breed that goes near to make the vice respectable

When we had made an end of our meal my uncle Ebenezer unlocked a drawer and drew out of it a clay pipe and a lump of tobacco from which he cut one fill before he locked it up again Then he sat down in the sun at one of the windows and silently smoked From time to time his eyes came coasting round to me and he shot out one of his questions Once it was And your mother³ and when I had told him that she too was dead Ay, she was a bonnie lassie! Then after another long pause Whae were these friends o yours?

I told him they were different gentlemen of the name of Campbell though, indeed there was only one and that the minister that had ever taken the least note of me but I began to think my uncle made too light of my position, and finding myself all alone with him I did not wish him to suppose me helpless

He seemed to turn this over in his mind and then, Davie my man said he ye've come to the right bit when ye came to your Uncle Ebenezer I've a great notion of the family and I mean to do the right by you but while I'm taking a bit think to mysel of what's the best thing to put you to—whether the law or the meenistry or maybe the army whilk is what boys are fondest of—I woudnae like the Balfours to be humbled before a wheen Hieland Campbells and I'll ask you to keep your tongue within your teeth Nae letters nae messages no kind of word to onybody or else—there's my door

'Uncle Ebenezer said I I've no manner of reason to suppose you mean anything but well by me For all that I would have you to know that I have a pride of my own It was by no will of mine that I came seeking you, and if you show me your door again I'll take you at your word

He seemed grievously put out Hoots toots, said he ca cannie man—ca cannie! Bide a day or two I'm nae warlock to find a fortune for you in the bottom of my parrritch bowl but just give me a day or two, and say naething to naebody and as sure as sure I'll do the right by you

Very well said I enough said If you want to help me there's no doubt but I'll be glad of it and none but I'll be grateful

It seemed to me (too soon I daresay) that I was getting the upper hand of my uncle and I began next to say that I must have the bed and bedclothes aired and put to sun dry for nothing would make me sleep in such a pickle

Is this my house or yours? said he in his keen voice and then all of a sudden broke off Na na said he I dinnae mean that What's mine is yours Davie my man and what's yours is mine Blood's thicker than water and there's naebody but you and me that ought the name And then on he rambled about the family and its ancient greatness and his father that began to enlarge the house and himself that stopped the building as a sinful waste and this put it in my head to give him Jennet Clouston's message

The limmer! he cried Twelve hunner and fifteen—that's every day since I had the limmer roupit!* Dod David I'll have her roasted on red peats before I'm by with her! A witch—a proclaimed witch! I'm aff and see the session clerk

And with that he opened a chest and got out a very old and well preserved blue coat and waistcoat and a good enough beaver hat both without lace These he threw on anyway and taking a staff from the cupboard locked it all up again and was for setting out when a thought arrested him

I cannae leave you by yoursel in the house said he I'll have to lock you out

The blood came to my face If you lock me out I said it'll be the last you'll see of me in friendship

He turned very pale and sucked his mouth in This is no the way he said looking wickedly at a corner of the floor— this is no the way to win my favour David

Sir says I with proper reverence for your age and our common blood I do not value your favour at a boddie's purchase I was brought up to have a good conceit of myself, and if you were all the uncle and all the family I had in the world ten times over I wouldn't buy your liking at such prices

Uncle Ebenezer went and looked out of the window for a while I could see him all trembling and twitching like a man with palsy But when he turned round he had a smile upon his face

Well well said he we must bear and forbear I'll no go that's all that's to be said of it

Uncle Ebenezer I said 'I can make nothing out of this You use me like a thief, you hate to have me in this house you let me see it every word and every minute it's not possible that you can like me and as for me I've spoken to you as I never thought to speak to any man Why do you seek to keep me then? Let me gang back—let me gang back to the friends I have and that like me!'

Na na na na he said very earnestly I like you fine well agree fine yet and for the honour of the house I couldnae let you leave the way ye came

*Sold up

Bide here quiet there's a good lad, just you bide here quiet a bittie and ye'll find that we agree

Well sir said I after I had thought the matter out in silence I'll stay a while It's more just I should be helped by my own blood than strangers and if we don't agree I'll do my best it shall be through no fault of mine

IV

I RUN A GREAT DANGER IN THE HOUSE OF SHAWS

FOR A DAY that was begun so ill the day passed fairly well We had the porridge cold again at noon and hot porridge at night porridge and small beer was my uncle's diet He spoke but little and that in the same way as before shooting a question at me after a long silence and when I sought to lead him in talk about my future slipped out of it again In a room next door to the kitchen where he suffered me to go I found a great number of books both Latin and English in which I took great pleasure all the afternoon Indeed the time passed so lightly in this good company that I began to be almost reconciled to my residence at Shaws, and nothing but the sight of my uncle and his eyes playing hide and seek with mine revived the force of my distrust

One thing I discovered which put me in some doubt This was an entry on the fly leaf of a chapbook (one of Patrick Walker's) plainly written by my father's hand and thus conceived To my brother Ebenezer on his fifth birth day Now what puzzled me was this That as my father was of course the younger brother he must either have made some strange error or he must have written before he was yet five an excellent, clear manly hand of writing

I tried to get this out of my head but though I took down many interesting authors old and new history poetry, and story book this notion of my father's hand of writing stuck to me and when at length I went back into the kitchen and sat down once more to porridge and small beer the first thing I said to Uncle Ebenezer was to ask him if my father had not been very quick at his book

Alexander' No him' was the reply I was far quicker mysel I was a clever chappie when I was young Why I could read as soon as he could

This puzzled me yet more and a thought coming into my head I asked if he and my father had been twins

He jumped upon his stool and the horn spoon fell out of his hand upon the floor What gars ye ask that' he said and he caught me by the breast of the jacket and looked this time straight into my eyes his own were little and light and bright like a bird's blinking and winking strangely

What do you mean' I asked very calmly for I was far stronger than he and not easily frightened Take your hand from my jacket This is no way to behave

My uncle seemed to make a great effort upon himself Dod man David'

he said "ye shouldnae speak to me about your father That - where the mistake is He sat a while and shook blinking in his plate He was all the brother that I ever had he added but with no heart in his voice and then he caught up his spoon and fell to supper again but still shaking

Now this last passage this laying of hands upon my person and sudden profession of love for my dead father went so clean beyond my comprehension that it put me into both fear and hope On the one hand I began to think my uncle was perhaps insane and might be dangerous on the other there came up into my mind (quite unbidden by me and even discouraged) a story like some ballad I had heard folks singing of a poor lad that was a rightful heir and a wicked kinsman that tried to keep him from his own For why should my uncle play a part with a relative that came almost a beggar to his door, unless in his heart he had some cause to fear him

With this notion all unacknowledged but nevertheless getting firmly settled in my head I now began to imitate his covert looks so that we sat at table like a cat and mouse each stealthily observing the other Not another word had he to say to me black or white but was bu y turning something secretly over in his mind and the longer we sat and the more I looled at him the more certain I became that the something was unfriendly to myself

When he had cleared the platter he got out a single pipeful of tobacco just as in the morning turned round a stool in the chimney corner and sat a while smoking his back to me

Davie he said at length I've been thinking then he paused and said it again There's a wee bit seller that I half promised ye before ye were born' he continued I promised it to your father O naething legal ye understand, just gentlemen daffing at their wile Well I keepit that bit money separate—it was a great expense but a promise is a promise—and it has grown by now to be a matter of just precisely—just exactly—and here he paused and stumbled—of just exactly forty pounds' This last he raj ped out with a sidelong glance over his shoulder and the next moment added almost with a scream Scots'

The pound Scots being the same thing as an English shilling the difference made by this second thought was considerable I could see besides that the whole story was a lie invented with some end which it puzzled me to guess, and I made no attempt to conceal the tone of rullcrv in which I answered—

"O think again sir! Pounds sterling I believe!"

That's what I said returned my uncle pounds sterling! And if you'll step out by to the door a minute just to see what kind of a night it is I'll get it out to ye and call ye in again

I did his will smiling to myself in my contempt that he should think I was so easily to be deceived It was a dark night with a few stars low down and as I stood just outside the door, I heard a hollow moaning of wind far off among the hills I said to myself there was something thundery and changeful in the weather and little knew of what vast importance that should prove to me before the evening passed

When I was called in again my uncle counted out into my hand seven and

thirty golden guinea pieces the rest was in his hand in small gold and silver but his heart failed him there and he crammed the change into his pocket

There said he that'll show you! I'm a queer man and strange wi strangers but my word is my bond and there's the proof of it

Now my uncle seemed so miserly that I was struck dumb by this sudden generosity and could find no words in which to thank him

No a word! said he Nae thanks I want nae thanks I do my duty I'm no saying that everybody would have done it but for my part (though I'm a careful body too) it's a pleasure to me to do the right by my brother's son and it's a pleasure to me to think that now we'll agree as such near friends should

I spoke him in return as handsomely as I was able but all the while I was wondering what would come next and why he had parted with his precious guineas for as to the reason he had given a baby would have refused it.

Presently he looked towards me sideways

And see here says he tit for tat

I told him I was ready to prove my gratitude in any reasonable degree and then waited looking for some monstrous demand And yet when at last he plucked up courage to speak it was only to tell me (very properly as I thought) that he was growing old and a little broken and that he would expect me to help him with the house and the bit of garden

I answered and expressed my readiness to serve

Well he said let's begin He pulled out of his pocket a rusty key There he says there's the key of the stair tower at the far end of the house Ye can only win into it from the outside for that part of the house is no finished Gang ye in there and up the stairs and bring me down the chest that's at the top There's paper in't he added

Can I have a light sir? said I

Na said he very cunningly Nae lights in my house

Very well sir said I Are the stairs good?

They're grand said he and then as I was going Keep to the wall he added there's nae banisters But the stairs are grand under foot

Out I went into the night The wind was still moaning in the distance though never a breath of it came near the house of Shaws It had fallen blacker than ever and I was glad to feel along the wall till I came the length of the stair tower door at the far end of the unfinished wing I had got the key into the keyhole and had just turned it when all upon a sudden without a sound of wind and thunder the whole sky lighted up with wild fire and went black again I had to put my hand over my eyes to get back to the colour of the darkness and indeed I was already half blinded when I stepped into the tower

It was so dark inside it seemed a body could scarce breathe but I pushed out with foot and hand and presently struck the wall with the one and the lowermost round of the stair with the other The wall by the touch was of fine hewn stone the steps too though somewhat steep and narrow were of polished mason's work and regular and solid under foot Minding my uncle's

word about the banisters I kept close to the tower side and felt my way in the pitch darkness with a beating heart

The house of Shaws stood five full storeys high not counting lofts Well, as I advanced it seemed to me the stair grew airier and a thought more light some and I was wondering what might be the cause of this change, when a second blink of the summer lightning came and went If I did not cry out it was because fear had me by the throat and if I did not fall it was more by Heaven's mercy than my own strength It was not only that the flash shone in on every side through breaches in the wall so that I seemed to be clambering aloft upon an open scaffold but the same passing brightness shewed me the steps were of unequal length, and that one of my feet rested that moment within two inches of the well

This was the grand stair! I thought and with the thought a gust of a kind of angry courage came into my heart My uncle had sent me here certainly to run great risks perhaps to die I swore I would settle that perhaps if I should break my neck for it got me down upon my hands and knees and as slowly as a snail feeling before me every inch and testing the solidity of every stone I continued to ascend the stair The darkness by contrast with the flash appeared to have redoubled nor was that all for my ears were now troubled and my mind confounded by a great stir of bats in the top part of the tower and the foul beasts flying downward sometimes beat about my face and body

The tower I should have said was square and in every corner the step was made of a great stone of a different shape to join the flights Well I had come close to one of these turns when feeling forward as usual my hand slipped upon the edge and found nothing but emptiness beyond it The stair had been carried no higher to set a stranger mounting it in darkness was to send him straight to his death and (although thanks to the lightning and my own precautions I was safe enough) the mere thought of the peril in which I might have stood and the dreadful height I might have fallen from brought out the sweat upon my body and relaxed my joints

But I knew what I wanted now and turned and groped my way down again with a wondering anger in my heart About half way down the wind sprang up in a clap and shook the tower and died again the rain followed and before I had reached the ground level it fell in buckets I put out my head into the storm and looked along towards the kitchen The door which I had shut behind me when I left now stood open and shed a little glimmer of light and I thought I could see a figure standing in the rain quite still like a man hearkening And then there came a blinding flash which showed me my uncle plainly just where I had fancied him to stand, and hard upon the heels of it a great roar of thunder

Now whether my uncle thought the crash to be the sound of my fall or whether he heard in it God's voice denouncing murder I will leave you to guess Certain it is at least that he was seized on by a kind of panic fear and that he ran into the house and left the door open behind him I followed as softly as I could, and coming unheard into the kitchen stood and watched him

He had found time to open the corner cupboard and bring out a great case bottle of aqua vitae and now sat with his back towards me at the table Ever and again he would be seized with a fit of deadly shuddering and groan aloud and carrying the bottle to his lips drank down the raw spirits by the mouthful

I stepped forward, came close behind him where he sat and suddenly clapping my two hands down upon his shoulders— Ah! cried I

My uncle gave a kind of broken cry like a sheep's bleat flung up his arms and tumbled to the floor like a dead man I was somewhat shocked at this but I had myself to look to first of all and did not hesitate to let him lie as he had fallen The keys were hanging in the cupboard and it was my design to furnish myself with arms before my uncle should come again to his senses and the power of devising evil In the cupboard were a few bottles some apparently of medicine a great many bills and other papers which I would willingly enough have rummaged had I had the time and a few necessaries that were nothing to my purpose Thence I turned to the chests The first was full of meal the second of moneybags and papers tied into sheaves in the third with many other things (and these for the riot part of clothes) I found a rusty ugly looking Highland dirk without the scabbard This then I concealed inside my waistcoat and turned to my uncle

He lay as he had fallen all huddled with one knee up and one arm sprawling abroad his face had a strange colour of blue and he seemed to have ceased breathing Fear came on me that he was dead then I got water and dashed it in his face and with that he seemed to come a little to himself working his mouth and fluttering his eyelids At last he looked up and saw me and there came into his eyes a terror that was not of this world

Come come said I sit up

Are you alive? he sobbed O man are ye alive?

That I am said I Small thanks to you!

He had begun to seek for his breath with deep sighs The blue phial" said he— in the aumry—the blue phial His breath came slower still

I ran to the cupboard and sure enough found there a blue phial of medicine with the dose written on it on a paper and this I administered to him with what speed I might

It's the trouble said he reviving a little, I have a trouble Davie It's the heart

I set him on a chair and looked at him It is true I felt some pity for a man that looked so sick but I was full besides of righteous anger and I numbered over before him the points on which I wanted explanation Why he lied to me at every word why he feared that I should leave him why he disliked it to be hinted that he and my father were twins— Is that because it is true? I asked why he had given me money to which I was convinced I had no claim and last of all why he had tried to kill me He heard me all through in silence, and then in a broken voice begged me to let him go to bed

I'll tell ye the morn he said as sure as death I will

And so weak was he that I could do nothing but consent I locked him into his room, however, and pocketed the key and then returning to the kitchen,

made up such a blaze as had not shone there for many a long year, and wrapping myself in my plaid lay down upon the chests and fell asleep

V

I GO TO THE QUEEN'S FERRY

MUCH RAIN FELL in the night and the next morning there blew a bitter wintry wind out of the northwest driving scattered clouds For all that and before the sun began to peep or the last of the stars had vanished I made my way to the side of the burn and had a plunge in a deep whirling pool All aglow from my bath I sat down once more beside the fire, which I replenished, and began gravely to consider by position

There was now no doubt about my uncle's enmity he would leave no stone unturned that he might compass my destruction But I was young and spirited and like most lads that have been country bred I had a great opinion of my shrewdness I had come to his door no better than a beggar and little more than a child he had met me with treachery and violence it would be a fine summation to take the upper hand and drive him like a herd of sheep

I sat there nursing my knee and smiling at the fire and I saw myself in fancy smell out his secrets one after another and grow to be that man's king and ruler The warlock of Essendean they say had made a mirror in which men could read the future it must have been of other stuff than burning coal, for in all the shapes and pictures that I sit and gazed at there was never a ship never a seaman with a hairy cap never a big bludgeon for my silly head or the least sign of all those tribulations that were ripe to fall on me

Presently all swollen with conceit I went upstairs and gave my prisoner his liberty He gave me good morning civilly and I gave the same to him smiling down upon him from the heights of my sufficiency Soon we were set to breakfast as it might have been the day before

'Well sir said I with a jeering tone have you nothing more to say to me?' And then, as he made no articulate reply it will be time I think to understand each other I continued You took me for a country Johnny Raw with no more mother wit or courage than a porridge stick I took you for a good man or no worse than others at least It seems we were both wrong What cause you have to fear me to cheat me and to attempt my life—

He murmured something about a jest and that he liked a bit of fun and then, seeing me smile changed his tone and assured me he would make all clear as soon as he had breakfasted I saw by his face that he had no lie ready for me, though he was hard at work preparing one and I think I was about to tell him so, when we were interrupted by a knocking at the door

Bidding my uncle sit where he was, I went to open it and found on the doorstep a half grown boy in sea clothes He had no sooner seen me than he begun to dance some step of the sea-hornpipe (which I had never before heard of far less seen), snapping his fingers in the air and footing it right cleverly

For all that he was blue with the cold and there was something in his face a look between tears and laughter that was highly pathetic and consisted ill with his gaiety of manner

What cheer mate' says he with a cracked voice
I asked him soberly to name his pleasure
O pleasure' says he and then began to sing

For its my delight of a shiny night
In the season of the year

Well said I if you have no business at all I will even be so unmannerly is to shut you out

Stay brother' he cried Have you no fun about you' or do you want to get me thrashed' I ve brought a letter from old Heasy oasy to Mr Belflower " He showed me a letter as he spoke And I say mate, he added I m mortal hungry

'Well ' said I come into the house and you shall have a bite if I go empty for it

With that I brought him in and set him down to my own place, where he fell to greedily on the remains of my breakfast winking to me between whiles, and making many faces which I think the poor soul considered manly Meanwhile my uncle had read the letter and sat thinking then suddenly he got to his feet with a great air of liveliness and pulled me apart into the farthest corner of the room

Read that said he and put the letter in my hand
Here it is lying before me as I write

The Hawes Inn at the Queen's Ferry

Sir—I he here with my hawser up and down and send my cabin boy to informe If you have any further commands for over seas to day will be the last occasion as the wind will serve us well out of the firth I will not seek to deny that I have had crosses with your doer* Mr Rankeillor of which if not speedily redd up you may looke to see some losses follow I have drawn a bill upon you as per margin and am, sir your most obedt humble servant

Elias Hoseason

'You see Davie resumed my uncle as soon as he saw that I had done "I have a venture with this man Hoseason, the captain of a trading brig *Covenant*, of Dysart Now if you and me was to walk over with yon lad I could see the captain at the Hawes or maybe on board the *Covenant* if there was papers to be signed and so far from a loss of time we can jog on to the lawyer, Mr Rankeillor s After a that's come and gone ye would be swier† to believe me upon my naked word but ye ll believe Rankellor He s factor to half the gentry in these parts an auld man forby highly respekit and he kenned your father

I stood awhile and thought I was going to some place of shipping which

*Agent

†Unwilling

was doubtless populous, and where my uncle durst attempt no violence, and indeed even the society of the cabin boy so far protected me. Once there I believed I could force on the visit to the lawyer even if my uncle were now insincere in proposing it and perhaps in the bottom of my heart I wished a nearer view of the sea and ships. You are to remember I had lived all my life in the inland hills, and just two days before had my first sight of the firth lying like a blue floor and the sailed ships moving on the face of it, no bigger than toys. One thing with another I made up my mind

Very well, says I let us go to the Ferry

My uncle got into his hat and coat and buckled an old rusty cutlass on, and then we trod the fire out, locked the door and set forth upon our walk

The wind being in that cold quarter the north west blew nearly in our faces, as we went. It was the month of June the grass was all white with daisies and the trees with blossom, but to judge by our blue nails and aching wrists the time might have been winter and the whiteness a December frost

Uncle Ebenezer trudged in the ditch jogging from side to side like an old ploughman coming home from work. He never said a word the whole way, and I was thrown for talk on the cabin boy. He told me his name was Ran some, but that he had followed the sea since he was nine but could not say how old he was, as he had lost his reckoning. He showed me tattoo marks, baring his breast in the teeth of the wind and in spite of my remonstrances, for I thought it was enough to kill him, he swore horribly whenever he remembered but more like a silly schoolboy than a man and boasted of many wild and bad things that he had done stealthy thefts false accusations ay and even murder but all with such a dearth of likelihood in the details and such a weak and crazy swagger in the delivery, as disposed me rather to pity than to believe him

I asked him of the brig (which he declared was the finest ship that sailed) and of Captain Hoseason in whose praises he was equally loud. Heasy easy (for so he still named the skipper) was a man by his account that minded for nothing either in heaven or earth one that as people said, would crack on all sail into the day of judgment, rough fierce unscrupulous and brutal and all thus my poor cabin boy had taught himself to admire as something seamanlike and manly. He would only admit one flaw in his idol. He ain't no seaman, he admitted 'That's Mr Shuan that navigates the brig he's the finest seaman in the trade, only for drink, and I tell you I believe it' Why look ere and turning down his stocking he showed me a great raw red wound that made my blood run cold 'He done that—Mr Shuan done it' he said, with an air of pride

"What!" I cried do you take such savage usage at his hands? Why, you are no slave to be so handled?

No,' said the poor moon calf, changing his tune at once, and so he'll find See 'ere", and he showed me a great case-knife which he told me was stolen 'O,' says he, 'let me see him try I dare him to, I'll do for him! O, he ain't the first!' And he confirmed it with a poor silly, ugly oath

I have never felt such pity for anyone in this wide world as I felt for that

half witted creature and it began to come over me that the brig *Covenant* (for all her pious name) was little better than a hell upon the seas

Have you no friends? said I

He said he had a father in some English seaport, I forgot which He was a fine man too he said but he's dead

In Heaven's name cried I can you find no reputable life on shore?

O no says he winking and looking very sly they would put me to a trade I know a trick worth two of that I do'

I asked him what trade could be so dreadful as the one he followed where he ran the continual peril of his life not alone from wind and sea but by the horrid cruelty of those who were his masters He said it was very true and then began to praise the life and tell what a pleasure it was to get on shore with money in his pocket and spend it like a man and buy apples and swagger and surprise what he called stick in the mud boys And then it's not all as bad as that says he there's worse off than me there's the twenty-pounders O laws! you should see them taking on Why I've seen a man as old as you I dessay —(to him I seemed old)— ah and he had a beard too—well and as soon as we cleared out of the river and he had the drug out of his head—my! how he cried and carried on! I made a fine fool of him I tell you! And then there's little uns too! oh little by me! I tell you I keep them in order When we carry little uns I have a rope's end of my own to wollop 'em And so he ran on until it came in on me what he meant by twenty pounders were those unhappy criminals who were sent over seas to slavery in North America or the still more unhappy innocents who were kidnapped or trepanned (as the word went) for private interest or vengeance

Just then we came to the top of the hill and looked down on the Ferry and the Hope The Firth of Forth (as is very well known) narrows at this point to the width of a good sized river which makes a convenient ferry going north and turns the upperreach into a land locked haven for all manner of ships Right in the midst of the narrows lies an islet with some ruins on the south shore they have built a pier for the service of the Ferry and at the end of the pier on the other side of the road and backed against a pretty garden of holly trees and hawthorns I could see the building which they called the Hawes Inn.

The town of Queensbury lies farther west and the neighbourhood of the inn looked pretty lonely at that time of day, for the boat had just gone north with passengers A skiff however, lay beside the pier with some seamen sleeping on the thwarts this as Ransome told me was the brig's boat waiting for the captain and about half a mile off and all alone in the anchorage he showed me the *Covenant* herself There was a seagoing bustle on board yards were swinging into place and as the wind blew from that quarter I could hear the song of the sailors as they pulled upon the ropes After all I had listened to upon the way I looked at that ship with abhorrence and from the bottom of my heart I pitied all poor souls that were condemned to sail in her

We had all three pulled up on the brow of the hill and now I marched across the road and addressed my uncle I think it right to tell you, sir says I there's nothing that will bring me on board that *Covenant*"

He seemed to waken from a dream Eh? he said What's that?
I told him over again

Well well he said we'll have to please ye I suppose But what are we standing here for? It's perishing cold and if I'm no mistaken they're busking the *Covenant* for sea

VI

WHAT BEFELL AT THE QUEEN'S FERRY

AS SOON AS we came to the inn Ransome led us up the stair to a small room with a bed in it and heated like an oven by a great fire of coal At the table hard by the churnney a tall dark sober looking man sat writing In spite of the heat of the room he wore a thick sea jacket buttoned to the neck and a tall hairy cap drawn down over his ears yet I never saw any man not even a judge upon the bench look cooler or more studious and self possessed than this ship captain

He got to his feet at once and coming forward offered his large hand to Ebenezer I am proud to see you Mr Balfour said he in a fine deep voice 'and glad that ye are here in time The wind's fair and the tide upon the turn, we'll see the old coal bucket burning on the Isle of May before to night

'Captain Hoseason returned my uncle you keep your room unco hot

'It's a habit I have Mr Balfour said the skipper I'm a cold rife man by my nature, I have a cold blood sir There's neither fur nor flannel—no sir nor hot rum, will warm up what they call the temperature Sir it's the same with most men that have been carbonadoed as they call it in the tropic seas

Well well captain replied my uncle we must all be the way we're made

But it chanced that this fancy of the captain's had a great share in my misfortunes For though I had promised myself not to let my kinsman out of sight, I was both so impatient for a nearer look of the sea and so sickened by the closeness of the room that when he told me to run downstairs and play myself awhile I was fool enough to take him at his word

Away I went therefore leaving the two men sitting down to a bottle and a great mass of papers and crossing the road in front of the inn walked down upon the beach With the wind in that quarter only little wavelets not much bigger than I had seen upon a lake beat upon the shore But the weeds were new to me—some green some brown and long and some with little bladders that crackled between my fingers Even so far up the firth the smell of the sea water was exceedingly salt and stirring the *Covenant* besides was beginning to shake out her sails which hung upon the yards in clusters and the spirit of all that I beheld put me in thoughts of far voyages and foreign places

I looked too at the seamen with the skiff—big brown fellows some in shirts some with jackets some with coloured handkerchiefs about their throats one with a brace of pistols stuck into his pockets two or three with knotty bludgeons and all with their case knives I passed the time of day with one that

looked less desperate than his fellows and asked him of the sailing of the brig. He said they would get under way as soon as the ebb set and expressed his gladness to be out of port where there were no taverns and fiddlers, but all with such horrifying oaths that I made haste to get away from him.

This threw me back on Ransome who seemed the least wicked of that gang and who soon came out of the inn and ran to me crying for a bowl of punch. I told him I would give him no such thing for neither he nor I was of an age for such indulgences. But a glass of ale you may have and welcome said I. He mopped and mowed at me and called me names but he was glad to get the ale for all that and presently we were set down at a table in the front room of the inn and both eating and drinking with a good appetite.

Here it occurred to me that as the landlord was a man of that country I might do well to make a friend of him. I offered him a share as was much the custom in those days but he was far too great a man to sit with such poor customers as Ransome and myself and he was leaving the room when I called him back to ask whether he knew Mr Rankeillor.

Hoot ay, says he and a very honest man. And O by the-by" says he, "was it you that come in with Ebenezer? And when I had told him yes, Yell be no friend of his" he asked meaning in the Scottish way that I would be no relative.

I told him no none.

I thought not said he and yet ye have a kind of gliff* of Mr Alexander" I said it seemed that Ebenezer was ill seen in the country.

Nae doubt said the landlord. He's a wicked auld man and there's many would like to see him gurnin in a tow † Jennet Clouston and mony mair that he has harried out of house and hame. And yet he was ance a fine young fellow too. But that was before the sough‡ gaed abroad about Mr Alexander that was like the death of him.

And what was it? I asked.

Ou just that he had killed him said the landlord. 'Did ye never hear that?'

And what would he kill him for? said I.

And what for just to get the place ' said he.

'The place?' said I. 'The Shaws?'

Nae other place that I ken said he.

Ay man? said I. Is that so? Was my—was Alexander the eldest son?'

Deed was he said the landlord. What else would he have killed him for?'

And with that he went away as he had been impatient to do from the beginning.

Of course I had guessed it a long while ago but it is one thing to guess, another to know and I sat stunned with my good fortune and could scarce grow to believe that the same poor lad who had trudged in the dust from

*Look

†Rope

‡Report.

Ettrick Forest not two days ago was now one of the rich of the earth and had a house and broad lands and might mount his horse to morrow All these pleasant things and a thousand others crowded into my mind as I sat staring before me out of the inn window and paying no heed to what I saw only I remember that my eye lighted on Captain Hoseason down on the pier among his seamen and speaking with some authority And presently he came marching back towards the house with no mark of a sailor's clumsiness but carrying his fine tall figure with a manly bearing and still with the same sober grave expression on his face I wondered if it was possible that Ransome's stories could be true and half disbelieved them they fitted so ill with the man's looks But indeed he was neither so good as I supposed him nor quite so bad as Ransome did for in fact he was two men and left the better one behind as soon as he set foot on board his vessel

The next thing I heard my uncle calling me and found the pair in the road together It was the captain who addressed me and that with an air (very flattering to a young lad) of grave equality

Sir, said he Mr Balfour tells me great things of you and for my own part I like your looks I wish I was for longer here that we might make the better friends, but we'll make the most of what we have Ye shall come on board my brig for half an hour till the ebb sets and drink a bowl with me

Now I longed to see the inside of a ship more than words can tell but I was not going to put myself in jeopardy and I told him my uncle and I had an appointment with a lawyer

Ay ay said he he passed me word of that But ye see the boat'll set ye ashore at the town pier and that's but a penny stone cast from Rankeillor's house And here he suddenly leaned down and whispered in my ear Take care of the old tod * he means mischief Come aboard till I can get a word with ye And then passing his arm through mine he continued aloud as he set off towards his boat But come what can I bring ye from the Carolinas? Any friend of Mr Balfour's can command A roll of tobacco? Indian feather work? a skin of a wild beast? a stone pipe? the mocking bird that mews for all the world like a cat? the cardinal bird that is as red as blood?—take your pick and say your pleasure

By this time we were at the boat side and he was handing me in I did not dream of hanging back I thought (the poor fool) that I had found a good friend and helper and I was rejoiced to see the ship As soon as we were all set in our places the boat was thrust off from the pier and began to move over the waters and what with my pleasure in this new movement and my surprise at our low position and the appearance of the shores and the growing bigness of the brig as we drew near to it I could hardly understand what the captain said and must have answered him at random

As soon as we were alongside (where I sat fairly gaping at the ship's height the strong humming of the tide against its sides and the pleasant cries of the seamen at their work) Hoseason, declaring that he and I must be the first

*Fox

aboard ordered a tackle to be sent down from the main yard In this I was whipped into the air and set down again on the deck where the captain stood ready waiting for me and instantly slipped back his arm under mine There I stood some while a little dizzy with the unsteadiness of all around me perhaps a little afraid and yet vastly pleased with these strange sights the captain meanwhile pointing out the strangest and telling me their names and uses

But where is my uncle? said I suddenly

Av said Hoseason with a sudden grimness that's the point

I felt I was lost With all my strength I plucked myself clear of him and ran to the bulwarks Sure enough there was the boat pulling for the town with my uncle sitting in the stern I gave a piercing cry— Help help! Murder! — so that both sides of the anchorage rang with it and my uncle turned round where he was sitting and showed me a face full of cruelty and terror

It was the last I saw Already strong hands had been plucking me back from the ship's side and now a thunderbolt seemed to strike me, I saw a great flash of fire and fell senseless

VII

I GO TO SEA IN THE BRIG COVENANT' OF DYSART

I CAME TO MYSELF in darkness in great pain bound hand and foot and deafened by many unfamiliar noises There sounded in my ears a roaring of water as of a huge mill dam the thrashing of heavy sprays the thundering of the sails and the shrill cries of seamen The whole world now heaved giddily up, and now rushed giddily downward and so sick and hurt was I in body and my mind so much confounded that it took me a long while chasing my thoughts up and down and ever stunned again by a fresh stab of pain to realize that I must be lying somewhere bound in the belly of that unlucky ship and that the wind must have strengthened to a gale With a clear perception of my plight, there fell upon me a blackness of despair a horror of remorse at my own folly, and a passion of anger at my uncle that once more bereft me of my senses

When I returned again to life the same uproar the same confused and violent movements shook and deafened me and presently to my other pains and distresses there was added the sickness of an unused landsman on the sea In that time of my adventurous youth I suffered many hardships but none that was so crushing to my mind and body, or lit by so few hopes as these first hours aboard the brig

I heard a gun fire and supposed the storm had proved too strong for us and we were firing signals of distress The thought of deliverance even by death in the deep sea was welcome to me Yet it was no such matter but (as I was afterwards told) a common habit of the captain's which I here set down to show that even the worst man may have his kindlier side We were then passing it appeared within some miles of Dysart where the brig was built and where old Mrs Hoseason the captain's mother had come some years before

to live and whether outward or inward bound the *Covenant* was never suffered to go by that place by day without a gun fired and colours shown

I had no measure of time day and night were alike in that ill smelling cavern of the ship's bowels where I lay and the misery of my situation drew out the hours to double How long therefore I lay waiting to hear the ship split upon some rock or to feel her reel head foremost into the depths of the sea I have not the means of computation But sleep at length stole from me the consciousness of sorrow

I was awakened by the light of a hand lantern shining in my face A small man of about thirty, with green eyes and a tangle of fair hair stood looking down at me

Well said he how goes it?

I answered by a sob and my visitor then felt my pulse and temples and set himself to wash and dress the wound upon my scalp

Ay said he a sore dunt* What man? Cheer up! The world's no done you've made a bad start of it but you'll make a better Have you had any meat?

I said I could not look at it and thereupon he gave me some brandy and water in a tin pannikin, and left me once more to myself

The next time he came to see me I was lying betwixt sleep and waking my eyes wide open in the darkness the sickness quite departed but succeeded by a horrid giddiness and swimming that was almost worse to bear I ached besides in every limb and the cords that bound me seemed to be of fire The smell of the hole in which I lay seemed to have become a part of me and during the long interval since his last visit I had suffered tortures of fear now from the scurrying of the ship's rats that sometimes pattered on my very face and now from the dismal imaginings that haunt the bed of fever

The glimmer of the lantern as a trap opened shone in like the heaven's sunlight and though it only showed me the strong dark beams of the ship that was my prison I could have cried aloud for gladness The man with the green eyes was the first to descend the ladder and I noticed that he came somewhat unsteadily He was followed by the captain Neither said a word but the first set to and examined me and dressed my wound as before while Hoseason looked me in my face with an odd black look

Now sir you see for yourself said the first a high fever no appetite no light no meat you see for yourself what that means

I am no conjurer Mr Riach said the captain

Give me leave sir" said Riach you've a good head upon your shoulders and a good Scotch tongue to ask with but I will leave you no manner of excuse I want that boy taken out of this hole and put in the forecastle

What ye may want sir is a matter of concern to nobody but yoursel returned the captain but I can tell ye that which is to be Here he is here he shall bide

'Admitting that you have been paid in a proportion said the other, 1

*Stroke.

will crave leave humbly to say that I have not Paid I am and none too much, to be the second officer of this old tub and you ken very well if I do my best to earn it But I was paid for nothing more

'If ye could hold back your hand from the tin pan Mr Riach I would have no complaint to make of ye returned the skipper and instead of asking riddles I make bold to say that ye would keep your breath to cool your porridge We'll be required on deck he added in a sharper note and set one foot upon the ladder

But Mr Riach caught him by the sleeve

Admitting that you have been paid to do a murder—" he began.

Hoseason turned upon him with a flash

What's that? he cried What kind of talk is that?

It seems it is talk that you can understand said Mr Riach looking him steadily in the face

Mr Riach I have sailed with ye three cruises" replied the captain In all that time sir ye should have learned to know me I'm a stiff man and a dour man but for what ye say the now—fie fie!—it comes from a bad heart and a black conscience If ye say the lad will die—

Ay will he! said Mr Riach

'Well sir is not that enough?' said Hoseason 'Flit him where ye please'

Thereupon the captain ascended the ladder and I who had lain silent throughout this strange conversation beheld Mr Riach turn after him and bow as low as to his knees in what was plainly a spirit of derision Even in my then state of sickness I perceived two things that the mate was touched with liquor as the captain hinted and that (drunk or sober) he was like to prove a valuable friend

Five minutes afterwards my bonds were cut I was hoisted on a man's back, carried up to the forecastle and laid in a bunk on some sea-blankets where the first thing that I did was to lose my senses

It was a blessed thing indeed to open my eyes again upon the daylight, and to find myself in the society of men The forecastle was a roomy place enough, set all about with berths in which the men of the watch below were seated smoking or lying down asleep The day being calm and the wind fair the scuttle was open and not only the good daylight but from time to time (as the ship rolled) a dusty beam of sunlight shone in and dazzled and delighted me I had no sooner moved moreover than one of the men brought me a drink of something healing which Mr Riach had prepared and bade me lie still and I should soon be well again There were no bones broken he explained

A clour* on the head was naething Man said he it was me that gave it ye!

Here I lay for the space of many days a close prisoner and not only got my health again but come to know my companions They were a rough lot indeed as sailors mostly are being men rooted out of all the kindly parts of life and condemned to toss together on the rough seas with masters no less cruel There were some among them that had sailed with the pirates and seen

*Blow

things it would be a shame even to speak of some were men that had run from the king's ships and went with a halter round their necks of which they made no secret, and all as the saying goes were at a word and a blow with their best friends Yet I had not been many days shut up with them before I began to be ashamed of my first judgment, when I had drawn away from them at the Ferry pier, as though they had been unclean beasts No class of man is altogether bad, but each has its own faults and virtues and these shipmates of mine were no exception to the rule Rough they were sure enough and bad, I suppose, but they had many virtues They were kind when it occurred to them, simple even beyond the simplicity of a country lad like me, and had some glimmerings of honesty

There was one man of maybe forty, that would sit on my berthsidge for hours and tell me of his wife and child He was a fisher that had lost his boat, and thus been driven to the deep sea voyaging Well it is years ago now, but I have never forgotten him His wife (who was young by him as he often told me) waited in vain to see her man return he would never again make the fire for her in the morning nor yet keep the bairn when she was sick Indeed, many of these poor fellows (as the event proved) were upon their last cruise, the deep seas and cannibal fish received them, and it is a thankless business to speak ill of the dead

Among other good deeds that they did they returned my money which had been shared among hem, and though it was about a third short I was very glad to get it and hoped great good from it in the land I was going to The ship was bound for the Carolinas and you must not suppose that I was going to that place merely as an exile The trade was even then much depressed since that and with the rebellion of the colonies and the formation of the United States it has of course come to an end but in those days of my youth, white men were still sold into slavery on the plantations and that was the destiny to which my wicked uncle had condemned me

The cabin boy Ransome (from whom I had first heard of these atrocities) came in at times from the round house where he berthed and served now nursing a bruised limb in silent agony now raving against the cruelty of Mr Shuan It made my heart bleed, but the men had a great respect for the chief mate who was as they said none such a bad man when he was sober Indeed I found there was a strange peculiarity about our two mates that Mr Riach was sullen, unkind, and harsh when he was sober and Mr Shuan would not hurt a fly except when he was drinking I asked about the captain, but I was told drink made no difference upon that man of iron

I did my best in the small time allowed me to make something like a man, or rather I should say something like a boy of the poor creature Ransome But his mind was scarce truly human He could remember nothing of the time before he came to sea, only that his father had made clocks and had a starling in the parlour, which could whistle The North Countrie all else had been blotted out in these years of hardship and cruelties He had a strange notion of the dry land picked up from sailors stories that it was a place where lads were put to some kind of slavery called a trade and where apprentices were

continually lashed and clapped into foul prisons In a town he thought every second person a decoy, and every third house a place in which seamen would be drugged and murdered To be sure I would tell him how kindly I had myself been used upon that dry land he was so much afraid of and how well fed and carefully taught both by my friends and my parents and if he had been recently hurt he would weep bitterly and swear to run away, but if he was in his usual cockbrain humour or (still more) if he had had a glass of spirits in the round house he would deride the notion

It was Mr Riach (Heaven forgive him!) who gave the boy drink and it was doubtless kindly meant but besides that it was ruin to his health it was the pitifullest thing in life to see this unhappy unfriended creature staggering and dancing and talking he knew not what Some of the men laughed but not all others would grow as black as thunder (thinking perhaps of their own child hood or their own children) and bid him stop that nonsense and think what he was doing As for me I felt ashamed to look at him, and the poor child still comes about me in my dreams

All this time you should know the *Covenant* was meeting continued head winds and tumbling up and down against head seas so that the scuttle was almost constantly shut and the forecastle lighted only by a swinging lantern on a beam There was constant labour for all hands the sails had to be made and shortened every hour the strain told on the men's temper there was a growl of quarrelling all day long from berth to berth and as I was never allowed to set my foot on deck you can picture to yourselves how weary of my life I grew to be and how impatient for a change

And a change I was to get as you shall hear but I must first tell of a conversation I had with Mr Riach which put a little heart in me to bear my troubles Getting him in a favourable stage of drunk (for indeed he never looked near me when he was sober) I pledged him to secrecy and told him my whole story

He declared it was like a ballad that he would do his best to help me that I should have paper pen and ink, and write one line to Mr Campbell and an other to Mr Rankeillor and if I had told the truth ten to one he would be able (with their help) to pull me through and set me in my rights

And in the meantime says he keep your heart up You're not the only one I'll tell you that There's many a man hoeing tobacco over seas that should be mounting his horse at his own door at home many and many! And here is all a variorum at the best Look at me I am a laird's son and more than half a doctor and here I am man Jack to Hoseason!

I thought it would be civil to ask him for his story

He whistled loud

Never had one, said he 'I liked fun, that's all' And he skipped out of the forecastle

VIII

THE ROUND HOUSE

ONE NIGHT about eleven o'clock a man of Mr Riach's watch (which was on deck) came below for his jacket, and instantly there began to go a whisper about the forecastle that Shuan had done for him at last. There was no need of a name, we all knew who was meant but we had scarce time to get the idea rightly in our heads far less to speak of it when the scuttle was again flung open and Captain Hoseason came down the ladder. He looked sharply round the bunks in the tossing light of a lantern, and then walking straight up to me he addressed me to my surprise, in tones of kindness

My man said he we want ye to serve in the round house You and Ran some are to change berths Run away aft with ye'

Even as he spoke two seamen appeared in the scuttle carrying Ransome in their arms and the ship at that moment giving a great sheer into the sea and the lantern swinging the light fell directly on the boy's face. It was as white as wax, and had a look upon it like a dreadful smile. The blood in me ran cold, and I drew in my breath as if I had been struck.

Run away aft run away aft with ye' cried Hoseason

And at that I brushed by the sailors and the boy (who neither spoke nor moved) and ran up the ladder on deck

The brig was sheering swiftly and giddily through a long cresting swell. She was on the starboard tack and on the left hand under the arched foot of the foresail I could see the sunset still quite bright. This at such an hour of the night, surprised me greatly but I was too ignorant to draw the true conclusion—that we were going north about round Scotland and were now on the high sea between the Orkney and Shetland Islands having avoided the dangerous currents of the Pentland Firth. For my part who had been so long shut in the dark and knew nothing of headwinds I thought we might be halfway or more across the Atlantic. And indeed (beyond that I wondered a little at the lateness of the sunset light) I gave no heed to it and pushed on across the decks running between the seas, catching at ropes and only saved from going overboard by one of the hands on deck who had always been kind to me.

The round house for which I was bound and where I was now to sleep and serve stood some six feet above the decks and considering the size of the brig, was of good dimensions. Inside were a fixed table and bench and two berths, one for the captain and the other for the two mates turn and turn about. It was all fitted with lockers from top to bottom so as to stow away the officers belongings and a part of the ship's stores. There was a second store room underneath which you entered by a hatchway in the middle of the deck. Indeed, all the best of the meat and drink and the whole of the powder were collected in this place and all the firearms except the two pieces of brass ordnance were set in a rack in the aftermost wall of the round house. The most of the ~~old~~ classes were in another place.

A small window with a shutter on each side and a skylight in the roof gave it light by day and after dark there was a lamp always burning. It was burning when I entered not brightly but enough to show Mr Shuan sitting at the table with the brandy bottle and a tin pannikin in front of him. He was a tall man strongly made and very black and he stared before him on the table like one stupid.

He took no notice of my coming in nor did he move when the captain followed and leant on the berth beside me looking darkly at the mate. I stood in great fear of Hoseason and had my reasons for it but something told me I need not be afraid of him just then and I whispered in his ear 'How is he?' He shook his head like one that does not know and does not wish to think and his face was very stern.

Presently Mr Riach came in. He gave the captain a glance that meant the boy was dead as plain as speaking and took his place like the rest of us so that we all three stood without a word staring down at Mr Shuan and Mr Shuan (on his side) sat without a word looking hard upon the table.

All of a sudden he put out his hand to take the bottle, and at that Mr Riach started forward and caught it away from him rather by surprise than violence crying out with an oath that there had been too much of this work altogether, and that a judgment would fall upon the ship. And as he spoke (the weather sliding doors standing open) he tossed the bottle into the sea.

Mr Shuan was on his feet in a trice he still looked dazed but he meant murder aye and would have done it, for the second time that night had not the captain stepped in between him and his victim.

Sit down! roars the captain 'Ye sot and swine, do ye know what ye've done! Ye've murdered the boy!'

Mr Shuan seemed to understand for he sat down again and put up his hand to his brow.

Well he said he brought me a dirty pannikin!'

At that word the captain and I and Mr Riach all looked at each other for a second with a kind of frightened look, and then Hoseason walked up to his chief officer took him by the shoulder led him across to his bunk and bade him lie down and go to sleep as you might speak to a bad child. The murderer cried a little but he took off his sea boots and obeyed.

Ah! cried Mr Riach with a dreadful voice, ye should have interfered long syne. It's too late now.'

Mr Riach said the captain this night's work must never be kennt in Dysart. The boy went overboard sir that's what the story is and I would give five pounds out of my pocket it was true! He turned to the table. What made ye throw the good bottle away? he added. There was nae sense in that sir. Here David draw me another. They're in the bottom locker and he tossed me a key. 'Ye'll need a glass yourself sir,' he added to Riach. You was an ugly sight to see.'

So the pair sat down and hob a nobbed and while they did so the murderer, who had been lying and whimpering in his berth raised himself upon his elbow and looked at them and at me.

That was the first night of my new duties and in the course of the next day I had got well into the run of them I had to serve at the meals which the captain took at regular hours sitting down with the officer who was off duty all the day through I would be running with a dram to one or the other of my three masters and at night I slept on a blanket thrown on the deck boards at the aftermost end of the round house and right in the draught of the two doors It was a hard and a cold bed nor was I suffered to sleep without interruption for someone would be always coming in from deck to get a dram and when a fresh watch was to be set two and sometimes all three would sit down and brew a bowl together How they kept their health, I know not any more than how I kept my own

And yet in other ways it was an easy service There was no cloth to lay, the meals were either of oatmeal porridge or salt junk except twice a week when there was duff and though I was clumsy enough and (not being firm on my sea legs) sometimes fell with what I was bringing them both Mr Riach and the captain were singularly patient I could not but fancy they were making up lee way with their consciences and that they would scarce have been so good with me if they had not been worse with Ransome

As for Mr Shuan the drink or his crime or the two together had certainly troubled his mind I cannot say I ever saw him in his proper wits He never grew used to my being there stared at me continuously (sometimes I could have thought with terror) and more than once drew back from my hand when I was serving him I was pretty sure from the first that he had no clear mind of what he had done and on my second day in the round house I had the proof of it We were alone and he had been staring at me a long time when, all at once up he got as pale as death and came close up to me to my great terror But I had not cause to be afraid of him

‘You were not here before?’ he asked

‘No sir said I

“There was another boy” he asked again and when I had answered him ‘Ah’ says he I thought that and went and sat down without another word, except to call for brandy

You may think it strange but for all the horror I had I was still sorry for him He was a married man with a wife in Leith, but whether or no he had a family I have now forgotten I hope not

Altogether it was no very hard life for the time it lasted which (as you are to hear) was not long I was as well fed as the best of them even their pickles, which were the great dainty, I was allowed my share of and had I liked I might have been drunk from morning to night, like Mr Shuan I had company, too and good company of its sort Mr Riach who had been to the college, spoke to me like a friend when he was not sulking and he told me many curious things, and some that were informing and even the captain though he kept me at the stick’s end the most part of the time would sometimes unbuckle bit and tell me of the fine countries he had visited

The shadow of poor Ransome to be sure lay on all four of us and on me and Mr Shuan, in particular most heavily And then I had another trouble of my

own Here I was doing dirty work for three men that I looked down upon and one of whom at least should have hung upon the gallows that was for the present and as for the future I could only see myself slaving alongside of negroes in the tobacco fields Mr Riach perhaps from caution would never suffer me to say another word about my story the captain whom I tried to approach rebuffed me like a dog and would not hear a word and as the days came and went my heart sank lower and lower till I was even glad of the work which kept me from thinking

IX

THE MAN WITH THE BELT OF GOLD

MORE than a week went by in which the ill-luck that had hitherto pursued the *Covenant* upon this voyage grew yet more strongly marked Some days she made a little way others she was driven actually back At last we were beaten so far to the south that we tossed and tacked to and fro the whole of the ninth day within sight of Cape Wrath and the wild rocky coast on either hand of it There followed on that a council of the officers and some decision which I did not rightly understand seeing only the result that we had made a fair wind of a foul one and were running south

The tenth afternoon there was a falling swell and a thick, wet white fog that hid one end of the brig from the other All afternoon when I went on deck I saw men and officers listening hard over the bulwarks— for breakers they said, and though I did not so much as understand the word, I felt danger in the air and was excited

Maybe about ten at night I was serving Mr Riach and the captain at their supper when the ship struck something with a great sound, and we heard voices singing out My two masters leaped to their feet

She's struck' said Mr Riach

No sir said the captain We've only run a boat down."

And they hurried out

The captain was in the right of it We had run down a boat in the fog and she had parted in the midst and gone to the bottom with all her crew but one This man (as I heard afterwards) had been sitting in the stern as a passenger, while the rest were on the benches rowing At the moment of the blow the stern had been thrown into the air and the man (having his hands free and for all he was encumbered with a frieze overcoat that came below his knees) had leaped up and caught hold of the brig's bowsprit It showed he had luck and much agility and unusual strength that he should have thus saved himself from such a pass And yet when the captain brought him into the round house and I set eyes on him for the first time he looked as cool as I did

He was smallish in stature but well set and as nimble as a goat, his face was of a good open expression but sunburnt very dark, and heavily freckled and pitted with the smallpox his eyes were unusually light and had a kind of

dancing madness in them that was both engaging and alarming and when he took off his great coat, he laid a pair of fine silver mounted pistols on the table and I saw that he was belted with a great sword His manners besides were elegant and he pledged the captain handsomely Altogether I thought of him, at the first sight that here was a man I would rather call my friend than my enemy

The captain, too was taking his observations but rather of the man's clothes than his person And to be sure as soon as he had taken off the great coat, he showed forth mighty fine for the round house of a merchant brig having a hat with feathers a red waistcoat breeches of black plush and a blue coat with silver buttons and handsome silver lace, costly clothes though somewhat spoiled with the fog and being slept in

I'm vexed, sir about the boat' says the captain

'There are some pretty men gone to the bottom' said the stranger, that I would rather see on the dry land again than half a score of boats'

Friends of yours' said Hoseason

'You have none such friends in your country' was the reply They would have died for me like dogs

Well sir' said the captain still watching him there are more men in the world than boats to put them in

And that's true too' cried the other, and ye seem to be a gentleman of great penetration

I have been in France sir says the captain so that it was plain he meant more by the words than showed upon the face of them

Well sir," says the other and so has many a pretty man for the matter of that

'No doubt sir' says the captain "and fine coats"

'Oho' says the stranger 'is that how the wind sets?' And he laid his hand quickly on his pistols

"Don't be hasty" said the captain 'Don't do a mischief before you see the need of it Ye've a French soldier's coat upon your back and a Scotch tongue in your head to be sure but so has many an honest fellow in these days, and I dare say none the worse of it'

So' said the gentleman in the fine coat are ye of the honest party' (meaning Was he a Jacobite? for each side in these sort of civil broils takes the name of honesty for its own)

'Why sir' replied the captain "I am a true blue Protestant and I thank God for it (It was the first word of any religion I had ever heard from him, but I learnt afterwards he was a great church goer while on shore) But for all that' says he I can be sorry to see another man with his back to the wall

Can ye so indeed?' asked the Jacobite Well sir to be quite plain with ye, I am one of those honest gentlemen that were in trouble about the year forty five and six and (to be still quite plain with ye) if I got into the hands of any of the red coated gentry it's like it would go hard with me No sir, I was for France and there was a French ship cruising here to pick me up but she gave us the go by in the fog—as I wish from the heart t'at ye had done your

sel! And the best that I can say is this If ye can set me ashore wh're I was going I have that upon me will reward you highly for your trouble

In France? says the captain No sir that I cannot do But where ye come from—we might talk of that

And then unhappily he observed me standing in my corner and packed me off to the galley to get supper for the gentleman I lost no time I promise you and when I came back into the round house I found the gentleman had taken a money belt from about his waist and poured out a guinea or two upon the table The captain was looking at the guineas and then at the belt and then at the gentleman's face, and I thought he seemed excited

Half of it he cried and I'm your man!

The other swept back the guineas into the belt and put it on again under his waistcoat I have told ye sir said he that not one doit of it belongs to me It belongs to my chieftain and here he touched his hat— and while I would be but a silly messenger to grudge some of it that the rest might come safe I should show myself a hound indeed if I brought my own carcase any too dear Thirty guineas on the seaside or sixty if ye set me on the Linnhe Loch Take it if ye will if not ye can do your worst

Ay said Hoseason And if I give ye over to the soldiers?

"Ye would make a fool's bargain said the other My chief let me tell you sir is forfeited like every honest man in Scotland His estate is in the hands of the man they call King George and it is his officers that collect the rents or try to collect them But for the honour of Scotland the poor tenant bodies take a thought upon their chief lying in exile and this money is a part of that very rent for which King George is looking Now sir ye seem to me to be a man that understands things bring this money within the reach of Government and how much of it'll come to you?

Little enough to be sure said Hoseason and then 'if they knew' he added drily But I think if I was to try that I could hold my tongue about it'

Ah but I'll begowk* ye there! cried the gentleman Play me false and I'll play you cunning If a hand's laid upon me they shall ken what money it is'

Well returned the captain, what must be must Sixty guineas and done Here's my hand upon it

And here's mine said the other

And thereupon the captain went out (rather hurriedly I thought) and left me alone in the round house with the stranger

At that period (so soon after the forty five) there were many exiled gentle men coming back at the peril of their lives either to see their freinds or to collect a little money and as for the Highland chiefs that had been forfeited, it was a common matter of talk how their tenants would stint themselves to send them money and their clansmen outface the soldiery to get it in and run the gauntlet of our great navy to carry it across All this I had of course heard tell of and now I had a man under my eyes whose life was a forfeit on all these counts and upon one more for he was not only a rebel and a smuggler of rents

*Befool

but had taken service with King Louis of France And as if all this were not enough he had a belt full of golden guineas round his loins Whatever my opinions, I could not look on such a man without a lively interest

And so you're a Jacobite? said I as I set meat before him

Ay said he beginning to eat And you by your long face should be a Whig? *

Betwixt and between said I not to annoy him, for indeed I was as good a Whig as Mr Campbell could make me

And that's naething said he But I'm saying Mr Betwixt and Between," he added this bottle of yours is dry and it's hard if I'm to pay sixty guineas and be grudged a dram upon the back of it

I'll go and ask for the key said I and stepped on deck

The fog was close as ever but the swell almost down They had laid the brig to not knowing precisely where they were, and the wind (what little there was of it) not serving well for their true course. Some of the hands were still harkening for breakers, but the captain and the two officers were in the waist with their heads together It struck me (I don't know why) that they were after no good and the first word I heard, as I drew softly near, more than confirmed me

It was Mr Riach crying out as if upon a sudden thought

Couldn't we wile him out of the round house?

'He's better where he is' returned Hoseason he hasn't room to use his sword

Well that's true said Riach but he's hard to come at'

Hut! said Hoseason We can get the man in talk one upon each side and pin him by the two arms or if that'll not hold sir we can make a run by both the doors and get him under hand before he has time to draw'

At hearing this I was seized with both fear and anger at these treacherous, greedy bloody men that I sailed with My first mind was to run away, my second was bolder

Captain said I the gentleman is seeking a dram and the bottle's out Will you give me the key?

They all started and turned about

Why here's our chance to get the firearms! Riach cried and then to me, Hark ye David he said Do you ken where the pistols are?

Ay ay put in Hoseason David kens David's a good lad Ye see David my man yon wild Hielandman is a danger to the ship besides being a rank foe to King George, God bless him

I had never been so be Davided since I came on board but I said Yes as if all I heard were quite natural

The trouble is resumed the captain that all our firelocks great and little, are in the round house under this man's nose likewise the powder Now if I, or one of the officers was to go in and take them he would fall to thinking But a lad like you, David might snap up a horn and a pistol or two without

*Whig or Whigamore was the cant name for those who were loyal to King George.

remark And if ye can do it cleverly I'll bear it in mind when it'll be good for you to have friends and that's when we come to Carolina

Here Mr Riach whispered him a little

Very right sir said the captain and then to myself And see here David your man has a beltful of gold and I give you my word that you shall have your fingers in it

I told him I would do as he wished though indeed I had scarce breath to speak with and upon that he gave me the key of the spirit locker and I began to go slowly back to the round house What was I to do? They were dogs and thieves they had stolen me from my own country they had killed poor Ransome and was I to hold the candle to another murder? But then upon the other hand there was the fear of death very plain before me for what could a boy and a man if they were as brave as lions do against a whole ship's company?

I was still arguing it back and forth and getting no clearness when I came into the round house and saw the Jacobite eating his supper under the lamp, and at that my mind was made up all in a moment I have no credit by it it was by no choice of mine but as if by compulsion, that I walked right up to the table and put my hand on his shoulder

Do ye want to be killed? said I

He sprang to his feet and looked a question at me as clear as if he had spoken

O! cried I 'they're all murderers here, it's a ship full of them! They've murdered a boy already Now it's you

Ay ay, said he but they haven't got me yet' And then looking at me curiously Will ye stand with me?

That will I! said I I am no thief nor yet murderer I'll stand by you'

'Why then said he what's your name?

'David Balfour said I and then thinking that a man with so fine a coat must like fine people I added for the first time of Shaws

It never occurred to him to doubt me for a Highlander is used to see great gentlefolks in great poverty but as he had no estate of his own my words nettled a very childish vanity he had

'My name is Stewart he said drawing himself up 'Alan Breck they call me A king's name is good enough for me though I bear it plain and have the name of no farmmidden to clap to the hind end of it'

And having administered this rebuke as though it were something of a chief importance he turned to examine our defences

The round house was built very strong to support the breaching of the seas Of its five apertures only the skylight and the two doors were large enough for the passage of a man The doors besides could be drawn close they were of stout oak and ran in grooves, and were fitted with hooks to keep them either shut or open as the need arose The one that was already shut I secured in this fashion, but when I was proceeding to slide to the other, Alan stopped me

David ' said he—'for I cannae bring to mind the name of your landed

estate and so will make so bold as to call you David—that door, being open, is the best part of my defences

It would be yet better shut says I

Not so David says he Ye see I have but one face but so long as that door is open and my face to it the best part of my enemies will be in front of me where I would aye wish to find them

Then he gave me from the rack a cutlass (of which there were a few besides the firearms) choosing it with great care shal ing his head and saying he had never in all his life seen poorer weapons and next he set me down to the table with a powder horn a bag of bullets and all the pistols which he bade me charge

And that will be better work let me tell you said he for a gentleman of decent birth than scraping plates and raxing* drams to a wheen tarry sailors

Thereupon he stood up in the midst with his face to the door, and drawing his great sword made trial of the room he had to wield it in

I must stick to the point he said shaking his head and that's a pity too It doesn't set my genius which is all for the upper guard And now said he do you keep on charging the pistols and give heed to me

I told him I would listen closely My chest was tight my mouth dry, the light dark to my eyes the thought of the numbers that were soon to leap in upon us kept my heart in a flutter and the sea which I heard washing round the brig and where I thought my dead body would be cast ere morning ran in my mind strangely

‘First of all said he how many are against us?’

I reckoned them up and such was the hurry of my mind I had to cast the numbers twice Fifteen said I

Alan whistled Well ’ said he ‘that can't be cured And now follow me It is my part to keep this door where I look for the main battle In that ye have no hand And mind and dinnae fire to this side unless they get me down; for I would rather have ten foes in front of me than one friend like you cracking pistols at my back

I told him indeed I was no great shot

“And that's very bravely said he cried in a great admiration of my candour
“There's many a pretty gentleman there wouldnae dare to say it

But then, sir, said I there is the door behind you which they may perhaps break in

Ay says he ‘and that is a part of your work No sooner the pistols charged than ye must climb up into yon bed where ye're handy at the window, and if they lift hand against the door ye're to shoot But that's not all Let's make a bit of a soldier of ye David What else have ye to guard?’

There's the skylight, said I But indeed Mr Stewart I would have need to have eyes upon both sides to keep the two of them, for when my face is at the one, my back is to the other

*Reaching

And that's very true' said Alan But have ye no ears in your head?"
 To be sure! cried I I must hear the bursting of the glass!
 Ye have some rudiments of sense said Alan grimly

X

THE SIEGE OF THE ROUND HOUSE

BUT NOW our time of truce was come to an end Those on deck had waited for my coming till they grew impatient and scarce had Alan spoken when the captain showed face in the open door

Stand! cried Alan and pointed his sword at him

The captain stood indeed but he neither winced nor drew back a foot.

'A naked sword' says he This is a strange return for hospitality'

'Do ye see me?' said Alan I am come of kings I bear a king's name My badge is the oak Do ye see my sword? It has slashed the heads off mair Whigamores than you have toes upon your feet Call up your vermin to your back, sir and fall on! The sooner the clash begins the sooner ye'll taste this steel throughout your vitals

The captain said nothing to Alan but he looked over at me with an ugly look David said he I'll mind this and the sound of his voice went through me with a jar

Next moment he was gone

'And now, said Alan let your hand keep your head, for the grip is coming'

Alan drew a dirk which he held in his left hand in case they should run in under his sword I on my part clambered up into the berth with an armful of pistols and something of a heavy heart and set open the window where I was to watch It was a small part of the deck that I could overlook but enough for our purpose The sea had gone down and the wind was steady and kept the sails quiet so that there was a great stillness in the ship in which I made sure I heard the sound of muttering voices A little after and there came a clash of steel upon the deck by which I knew they were dealing out the cutlasses and one had been let fall and after that silence again

I do not know if I was what you call afraid but my heart beat like a bird's both quick and little and there was a darkness came before my eyes which I continually rubbed away and which continually returned As for hope I had none but only a darkness of despair and a sort of anger against all the world that made me long to sell my life as dear as I was able I tried to pray I remember but that same hurry of my mind like a man running would not suffer me to think upon the words, and my chief wish was to have the thing begin and be done with it

It came all of a sudden when it did with a rush of feet and a roar, and then a shout from Alan and a sound of blows and someone crying out as if hurt I

ooked back over my shoulder, and saw Mr Shuan in the doorway, crossing blades with Alan

That's him that killed the boy ' I cried

'Look to your window!' said Alan and as I turned back to my place, I saw him pass his sword through the mate's body

It was none too soon for me to look to my own part, for my head was scarce back at the window before five men, carrying a spare yard for a battering ram, ran past me and took post to drive the door in I had never fired with a pistol in my life and not often with a gun, far less against a fellow creature. But it was now or never, and just as they swang the yard, I cried out, 'Take that' and shot into their midst

I must have hit one of them, for he sang out and gave back a step, and the rest stopped as if a little disconcerted Before they had time to recover, I sent another ball over their heads, and at my third shot (which went as wide as the second) the whole party threw down the yard and ran for it

Then I looked round again into the deck house The whole place was full of the smoke of my own firing, just as my ears seemed to be burst with the noise of the shots But there was Alan, standing as before only now his sword was running blood to the hilt, and himself so swelled with triumph and fallen into so fine an attitude, that he looked to be invincible Right before him on the floor was Shuan on his hands and knees the blood was pouring from his mouth and he was sinking slowly lower, with a terrible white face, and just as I looked some of those from behind caught hold of him by the heels and dragged him bodily out of the round-house I believe he died as they were doing it

'There's one of your Whigs for ye!' cried Alan, and then turning to me, he asked if I had done much execution

I told him I had winged one and thought it was the captain

"And I've settled two says he No there's not enough blood let, they'll be back again To your watch, David This is but a dram before meat '

I settled back to my place re charging the three pistols I had fired and keeping watch with both eye and ear

Our enemies were disputing not far off upon the deck and that so loudly that I could hear a word or two above the washing of the seas

'It was Shuan bauchled* it,' I heard one say

And another answered him with a 'Wheesht man! He's paid the piper'

After that the voices fell again into the same muttering as before Only now, one person spoke most of the time as though laying down a plan, and first one and then another answered him briefly like men taking orders By this I made sure they were coming on again, and told Alan

'It's what we have to pray for ' said he Unless we can give them a good distaste of us, and done with it there'll be nae sleep for either you or me But this time mind they'll be in earnest '

By this my pistols were ready, and there was nothing to do but listen and

*Bungled

wait While the brush lasted I had not the time to think if I was frightened but now when all was still again my mind ran upon nothing else The thought o' the sharp swords and the cold steel was strong in me, and presently when I began to hear stealthy steps and a brushing of men's clothes against the round house wall and knew they were taking their places in the dark I could have found it in my mind to cry out loud

All this was upon Alan's side and I began to think my share of the fight was at an end when I heard someone drop softly on the roof above me

Then there came a single call on the seapipe and that was the signal A knot of them made one rush of it cutlass in hand against the door and at the same moment the glass of the skylight was dashed in a thousand pieces and a man leaped through and landed on the floor Before he got his feet I had clapped a pistol to his back and might have shot him too, only at the touch of him (and him alive) my whole flesh misgave me and I could no more pull the trigger than I could have flown

He had dropped his cutlass as he jumped and when he felt the pistol whipped straight round and laid hold of me roaring out an oath and at that either my courage came again or I grew so much afraid as he came to the same thing for I gave a shriek and shot him in the midst of the body He gave the most horrible ugly groan and fell to the floor The foot of a second fellow whose legs were dangling through the skylight struck me at the same time upon the head and at that I snatched another pistol and shot this one through the thigh, so that he slipped through and tumbled in a lump on his companion's body There was no talk of missing any more than there was time to aim I clapped the muzzle to the very place and fired

I might have stood and stared at them for long but I heard Alan shout as if for help and that brought me to my senses

He had kept the door so long but one of the seamen while he was engaged with others had run in under his guard and caught him about the body Alan was dirking him with his left hand but the fellow clung like a leech Another had broken in and had his cutlass raised The door was thronged with their faces I thought we were lost, and catching up my cutlass fell on them in flank.

But I had not time to be of help The wrestler dropped at last and Alan, leaping back to get his distance ran upon the others like a bull roaring as he went They broke before him like water turning and running and falling one against another in their haste The sword in his hands flashed like quick-silver into the huddle of our fleeing enemies and at every flash there came the scream of a man hurt I was still thinking we were lost when lo! they were all gone and Alan was driving them along the deck as a sheep dog chases sheep

Yet he was no sooner out than he was back again being as cautious as he was brave and meanwhile the seamen continued running and crying out as if he was still behind them and we heard them tumble one upon another into the forecastle and clasp to the hatch upon the top

The round house was like a shambles three were dead inside another lay in his death agony across the threshold and there were Alan and I victorious and unhurt

He came up to me with open arms Come to my arms' he cried and embraced and kissed me hard upon both cheeks David said he I love you like a brother And O man he cried in a kind of ecstasy am I no a bonny fighter?

Thereupon he turned to the four enemies passed his sword clean through each of them, and tumbled them out of doors one after the other As he did so, he kept humming and singing and whistling to himself, like a man trying to recall an air only what he was trying was to make one All the while flush was in his face and his eyes were as bright as a five year old child's with a new toy And presently he sat down upon the table sword in hand, the air that he was making all the time began to run a little clearer and then clearer still and then out he burst with a great voice into a Gaelic song

I have translated it here not in verse (of which I have no skill) but at least in the king's English He sang it often afterwards and the thing became popular so that I have heard it, and had it explained to me many's the time

*This is the song of the sword of Alan,
The smith made it,
The fire set it,
Now it shines in the hand of Alan Breck*

*Their eyes were many and bright,
Swift were they to behold,
Many the hands they guided,
The sword was alone*

*The dun deer troop over the hill,
They are many, the hill is one,
The dun deer vanish,
The hill remains*

*Come to me from the hills of heather,
Come from the isles of the sea,
O far beholding eagles,
Here is your meat*

Now this song which he made (both words and music) in the hour of our victory is something less than just to me who stood beside him in the tussle Mr Shuan and five more were either killed outright or thoroughly disabled, but of these two fell by my hand the two that came by the skylight Four more were hurt, and of that number one (and he not the least important) got his hurt from me So that altogether I did my fair share both of the killing and the wounding and might have claimed a place in Alan's verses But poets have to think upon their rhymes, and in good prose talk Alan always did me more than justice

In the meanwhile I was innocent of any wrong being done me For not only I knew no word of the Gaelic but what with the long suspense of the waiting, and the scurry and strain of our two spirits of fighting and more than all, the

horror I had of some of my own share in it the thing was no sooner over than I was glad to stagger to a seat There was that tightness on my chest that I could hardly breathe the thought of the two men I had shot sat upon me like a nightmare and all upon a sudden and before I had a guess of what was following I began to sob and cry like any child

Alan clapped my shoulder and said I was a brave lad and wanted nothing but sleep

I'll take the first watch said he 'You've done well by me David first and last and I wouldn't lose you for all Appin—no nor for Breadalbane

So I made up my bed on the floor and he took the first spell pistol in hand and sword on knee three hours by the captain's watch upon the wall Then he roused me up and I took my turn of three hours before the end of which it was broad day and a very quiet morning with a smooth rolling sea that tossed the ship and made the blood run to and fro on the round house floor, and a heavy rain that drummed upon the roof All my watch there was nothing stirring and by the banging of the helm I knew they had even no one at the tiller Indeed (as I learned afterwards) there were so many of them hurt or dead and the rest in so ill a temper that Mr Riach and the captain had to take turn and turn like Alan and me or the brig might have gone ashore and nobody the wiser It was a mercy the night had fallen so still for the wind had gone down as soon as the rain began Even as it was I judged by the wailing of a great number of gulls that went crying and fishing round the ship that she must have drifted pretty near the coast or one of the islands of the Hebrides, and at last looking out of the door of the round house I saw the great stone hills of Skye on the right hand and a little more astern the strange isle of Rum,

XI

THE CAPTAIN KNUCKLES UNDER

ALAN AND I sat down to breakfast about six of the clock The floor was covered with broken glass and in a horrid mess of blood which took away my hunger In all other ways we were in a situation not only agreeable but merry having ousted the officers from their own cabin and having at command all the drink in the ship—both wine and spirits—and all the dainty part of what was eatable such as the pickles and the fine sort of bread This of itself was enough to set us in good humour but the richest part of it was this that the two thirstiest men that ever came out of Scotland (Mr Shuan being dead) were now shut in the fore part of the ship and condemned to what they hated most—cold water

And depend upon it' Alan said 'we shall hear more of them ere long Ye may keep a man from the fighting but never from his bottle

We made good company for each other Alan indeed expressed himself most lovingly and taking a knife from the table cut me off one of the silver buttons from his coat

'I had them says he from my father Duncan Stewart and now give ye one of them to be a keepsake for last night's work And wherever ye go and show that button the friends of Alan Breck will come around you

He said this as if he had been Charlemagne and commanded armies and in deed much as I admired his courage I was always in danger of smiling at his vanity, in danger I say for had I not kept my countenance I would be afraid to think what a quarrel might have followed

As soon as we were through with our meal he rummaged in the captain's locker till he found a clothesbrush and then taking off his coat began to visit his suit and brush away the stains with such care and labour as I supposed to have been only usual with women To be sure he had no other, and besides (as he said) it belonged to a King and so behoved to be royally looked after

For all that, when I saw what care he took to pluck out the threads where the button had been cut away I put a higher value on his gift

He was still so engaged when we were hailed by Mr Riach from the deck, asking for a parley and I climbing through the sky light and sitting on the edge of it pistol in hand and with a bold front though inwardly in fear of broken glass hailed him back again and bade him speak out He came to the edge of the round house and stood on a coil of rope so that his chin was on a level with the roof, and we looked at each other a while in silence Mr Riach as I do not think he had been very forward in the battle so he had got off with nothing worse than a blow upon the cheek but he looked out of heart and very weary, having been all night afoot either standing watch or doctoring the wounded.

'This is a bad job said he at last shaking his head

"It was none of our choosing said I

'The captain says he would like to speak with your friend They might speak at the window

And how do we know what treachery he means? cried I

He means none, David,' returned Mr Riach and if he did I'll tell ye the honest truth we couldnae get the men to follow

Is that so? said I

'I'll tell ye more than that" said he 'It's not only the men it's me, I'm frightened Davie' And he smiled across at me No he continued what we want is to be shut of him

Thereupon I consulted with Alan and the parley was agreed to and parole given upon either side but this was not the whole of Mr Riach's business and he now begged me for a dram with such instancy and such reminders of his former kindness that at last I handed him a pannikin with about a gill of brandy He drank a part and then carried the rest down upon the deck, to share it (I suppose) with his superior

A little after the captain came (as we agreed) to one of the windows and stood there in the rain with his arm in a sling and looking stern and pale and so old that my heart smote me for having fired upon him

Alan at once held a pistol in his face

"Put i' a' thing up' said the captain Have I not passed my word sir? or do ye seek to affront me?

Captain says Alan I doubt your word is breakable Last night ye haggled and argle bargled like an apple wife and then passed me your word and gave me your hand to back it and ye ken very well what was the upshot Be damned to your word! says he

Well well sir' said the captain, ye'll get little good by swearing (And truly that was a fault of which the captain was quite free) But we have other things to speak he continued bitterly Ye've made a sore hash of my brig I haven't hands enough left to work her and my first officer (whom I could ill spare) has got your sword through his vitals and passed without speech There is nothing left me, sir but to put back into the port of Glasgow after hands and there (by your leave) ye will find them that are better able to talk to you

'Ay' said Alan and faith I'll have a talk with them mysel' Unless there's naebody speaks English in that town I have a bonny tale for them Fifteen tarry sailors upon the one side, and a man and a hafling boy upon the other! O man it's peetiful'

Hoseason flushed red

'No' continued Alan that'll no do Ye'll just have to set me ashore as we agreed

Ay said Hoseason but my first officer is dead—ye ken best how There's none of the rest of us acquaint with this coast sir and it's one very dangerous to ships

I give ye your choice says Alan Set me on dry ground in Appin or Ardgour or in Morven or Arisaig or Morar or in brief where ye please, within thirty miles of my own country, except in a country of the Campbells That's a broad target If ye miss that ye must be as feckless at the sailoring as I have found ye at the fighting Why my poor country people in their bit cobles* pass from island to island in all weathers—ay and by night too for the matter of that

A coble's not a ship sir said the captain It has nae draught of water'

Well then to Glasgow if ye list! says Alan We'll have the laugh of ye at the least

My mind runs little upon laughing said the captain But all this will cost money sir

Well sir says Alan I am nae weather cock Thirty guineas if ye land me on the sea side and sixty if ye put me in the Linnhe Loch

But see sir where we lie we are but a few hours sail from Ardnamurchan" said Hoseason Give me sixty and I'll set ye there'

And I'm to wear my brogues and run jeopardy of the red coats to please you? cries Alan No sir if ye want sixty guineas earn them and set me in my own country

It's to risk the brig sir said the captain, and your own lives along with her

Take it or want it says Alan

'Could ye pilot us at all?' asked the captain, who was frowning to himself

*Coble a small boat used in fishing

Well it's doubtful ' said Alan I'm more of a fighting man (as ye have seen for yoursel') than a sailorman But I have been often enough picked up and set down upon this coast and should ken something of the lie of it

The captain shook his head still frowning

If I had lost less money on this uncanny cruise says he I would see you in a rope's end before I risked my brig sir But be it as ye will As soon as I get a slant of wind (and there's some coming or I'm the more mistaken) I'll put it in hand But there's one thing more We may meet in with a king's ship and she may lay us aboard sir with no blame of mine they keep the cruisers thick upon this coast ye ken who for Now sir if that was to befall ye might leave the money

Captain says Alan if ye see a pennant it shall be your part to run away And now, as I hear you're a little short of brandy in the fore part I'll offer you a change a bottle of brandy against two buckets of water

That was the last clause of the treaty and was duly executed on both sides, so that Alan and I could at least wash out the round house and be quit of the memorials of those whom we had slain and the captain and Mr Riach could be happy again in their own way the name of which was drink

XII

I HEAR OF THE RED FOX"

BEFORE we had done cleaning out the round house a breeze sprang up from a little to the east of north This blew off the rain and brought out the sun

And here I must explain and the reader would do well to look at a map On the day when the fog fell and we ran down Alan's boat we had been running through the Little Minch At dawn after the battle we lay becalmed to the east of the Isle of Canna or between that and Isle Eriska in the chain of the Long Island Now to get from there to the Linnhe Loch the straight course was through the narrows of the Sound of Mull But the captain had no chart, he was afraid to trust his brig so deep among the islands and the wind serving well he preferred to go west of Tiree and come up under the southern coast of the great Isle of Mull

All day the breeze held in the same point and rather freshened than died down and towards afternoon a swell began to set in from round the outer Hebrides Our course to go around about the inner isles was to the west of south so that at first we had this swell upon our beam and we were much rolled about But after nightfall when we had turned the end of Tiree and begun to head more to the east the sea came right astern

Meanwhile the early part of the day before the swell came up was very pleasant, sailing as we were in a bright sunshine and with many mountainous islands upon different sides Alan and I sat in the round house with the doors open on each side (the wind being straight astern) and smoked a pipe or two

of the captain's fine tobacco It was at this time we heard each other's stories which was the more important to me as I gained some knowledge of the wild Highland country on which I was so soon to land In those days so close on the back of the great rebellion it was needful a man should know what he was doing when he went upon the heather

It was I that showed the example telling him all my misfortune which he heard with great good nature Only when I came to mention that good friend of mine Mr Campbell the minister Alan fired up and cried out that he hated all that were of that name

Why said I he is a man you should be proud to give your hand to "

I know nothing I would help a Campbell to says he unless it was a leaden bullet I would hunt all of that name like blackcocks If I lay dying I would crawl upon my knees to my chamber window for a shot at one

Why Alan I cried what ails ye at the Campbells?

Well, says he ye ken very well that I am an Appin Stewart, and the Campbells have long harried and wasted those of my name ay and got lands of us by treachery—but never with the sword he cried loudly and with the word brought down his fist upon the table But I paid the less attention to this for I knew it was usually said by those who have the underhand There's more than that he continued and all in the same story lying words lying papers tricks fit for a peddler, and the show of what's legal over all to make a man the more angry

You that are so wasteful of your buttons ' said I, ' I can hardly think you would be a good judge of business

Ah! says he falling again to smiling I got my wastefulness from the same man I got the buttons from and that was my poor father Duncan Stewart grace be to him! He was the prettiest man of his kindred, and the best swordsman in the Hielands David and that is the same as to say in all the world I should ken for it was him that taught me He was in the Black Watch when first it was mustered and like other gentleman privates had a gillie at his back to carry his firelock for him on the march Well the King it appears was wishful to see Hieland swordsmanship and my father and three more were chosen out and sent to London town to let him see it at the best So they were had into the palace and showed the whole art of the sword for two hours at a stretch before King George and Queen Carline and the Butcher Cumberland and many more of whom I havenae mind And when they were through the King (for all he was a rank usurper) spoke them fair and gave each man three guineas in his hand Now as they were going out of the palace they had a porter's lodge to go by and it came in on my father as he was perhaps the first private Hieland gentleman that had ever gone by that door it was right he should give the poor porter a proper notion of their quality So he gives the King's three guineas into the man's hand as if it was his common custom the three others that came behind him did the same and there they were on the street never a penny for their pains Some say it was one that was the first to fee the King's porter and some say it was another but the truth of it is that it was Duncan Stewart, as I am willing

to prove with either sword or pistol And that was the father that I had, God rest him'

'I think he was not the man to leave you rich said I

And that's true said Alan He left me my breeks to cover me and little besides And that was how I came to enlist which was a black spot upon my character at the best of times and would still be a sore job for me if I fell among the red coats

What cried I you were in the English army?

'That was I said Alan But I deserted to the right side at Preston Pans—and that's some comfort

I could scarcely share this view holding desertion under arms for an unpardonable fault in honour But for all I was so young I was wiser than say my thought Dear dear says I the punishment is death

Ay said he if they got hands on me it would be a short shrift and a lang tow for Aln' But I have the King of France's commission in my pocket, which would ave be some protection

I misdoubt it much said I

I have doubts myself said Alan dryly

And good heaven man cried I you that are a condemned rebel, and a deserter and a man of the French King's—what tempts ye back into this country? It's a braving of Providence

Tut' says Aln' I have been back every year since forty six!'

And what brings ye man? cried I

Well ye see I weary for my friends and country said he France is a braw place nae doubt but I weary for the heather and the deer And then I have bit things that I attend to Whiles I pick up a few lads to serve the King of France recruits ye see and that's ye a little money But the heart of the mitter is the business of my chief Ardshiel

I thought they called your chief Appin said I

Ay but Ardshiel is the captain of the clan said he which scarcely cleared my mind Ye see David he that was all his life so great a man and come of the blood and bearing the name of kings is now brought down to live in a French town like a poor and private person He that had four hundred swords at his whistle I have seen with these eyes of mine buying butter in the market place, and taking it home in a little leif This is not only a pain but a disgrace to us of his family and clan There are the bairns forby the children and the hope of Appin that must be learned their letters and how to hold a sword in that far country Now the tenants of Appin have to pay a rent to King George but their hearts are staunch they are true to their chief and what with love and a bit of pressure and maybe a threat or two the poor folk scrape up a second rent for Ardshiel Well David I'm the hand that carries it And he struck the belt about his body so that the guineas rang

Do they pay both? cried I

Ay David both says he

'What! two rents? I repeated

Ay David ' said he I told a different tale to yon captain man but this is the truth of it And it's wonderful to me how little pressure is needed But that's the handiwork of my good kinsman and my father's friend James of the Glens, James Stewart that is Ardshiel's half brother He it is that gets the money in and does the management

This was the first time I heard the name of that James Stewart, who was afterwards so famous at the time of his hanging But I took little heed at the moment for all my mind was occupied with the generosity of these poor Highlanders

I call it noble I cried 'I'm a Whig or little better, but I call it noble '

Ah said he, yere a Whig but ye're a gentleman and that's what does it Now if ye were one of the cursed race of Campbell, ye would gnash your teeth to hear tell of it If ye were the Red Fox And at that name his teeth shut together and he ceased speaking I have seen many a grim face, but never a grimmer than Alan's when he had named the Red Fox

And who is the Red Fox? I asked daunted but still curious

Who is he? cried Alan 'Well and I'll tell you that When the men of the clans were broken at Culloden and the good cause went down and the horses rode over the fetlocks in the best blood of the north Ardshiel had to flee like a poor deer upon the mountains—he and his lady and his bairns A sair job we had of it before we got him shipped and while he still lay in the heather the English rogues that couldnae come at his life were striking at his rights They stripped him of his powers they stripped him of his lands they plucked the weapons from the hands of his clansmen that had borne arms for thirty centuries ay and the very clothes off their backs—so that it's now a sin to wear a tartan plaid and a man may be cast into gaol if he has but a kilt about his legs One thing they couldnae kill That was the love the clansmen bore their chief These guineas are the proof of it And now, in there steps a man, a Campbell red headed Colin of Glenure—

'Is that him you call the Red Fox?' said I

'Will ye bring me his brush?' cried Alan fiercely 'Ay, that's the man In he steps and gets papers from King George to be so-called King's factor on the lands of Appin And at first he sings small and is hail fellow-well-met with Sheamus—that's James of the Glens my chieftain's agent But by-and-by that came to his ears that I have just told you how the poor commons of Appin the farmers and the crofters and the bounen, were wringing their very plaids to get a 'second rent and send it over seas for Ardshiel and his poor bairns What was it ye called it when I told ye?'

I called it noble Alan said I

'And you little better than a common Whig!' cried Alan But when it came to Colin Roy the black Campbell blood in him ran wild He sat gnashing his teeth at the wine table What! should a Stewart get a bit of bread and him not be able to prevent it? Ah Red Fox if ever I hold you at a gun's end, the Lord have pity upon ye! (Alan stopped to swallow his anger) Well, David what does he do? He declares all the farms to let And thinks he in us black heart I'll get other tenants that'll overbid these Stewarts and

Macolls and Macrobs (for these are all names in my clan David), 'and then thinks he Ardshiel will have to hold his bonnet on a French roadside

Well said I what followed?

Alan laid down his pipe which he had long since suffered to go out, and set his two hands upon his knees

Ay said he ye'll never guess that! For these same Stewarts and Macolls and Macrobs (that had two rents to pay, one to King George by stark force and one to Ardshiel by natural kindness) offered him a better price than any Campbell in all broad Scotland and far he sent seeking them—as far as to the sides of the Clyde and the cross of Edinburgh—seeking and fleecing and begging them to come where there was a Stewart to be starved and a red headed hound of a Campbell to be pleased!

Well Alan said I that is a strange story and a fine one too And Whig as I may be I am glad the man was beaten

Him beaten? echoed Alan It's little ye'en of Campbells and less of the Red Fox Him beaten? No nor will be till his blood's on the hillside! But if the day comes David man that I can find time and leisure for a bit of hunting there grows not enough heather in all Scotland to hide him from my vengeance!

Man Alan, said I ye are neither very wise nor very Christian to blow off so many words of anger They will do the man ye call the Fox no harm, and yourself no good Tell me your tale plainly out What did he next?

And that's a good observe David said Alan Troth and indeed they will do him no harm the more's the pity! And barring that about Christianity (of which my opinion is quite otherwise or I would be nae Christian) I am much of your mind

Opinion here or opinion there said I 'it's a kent thing that Christianity forbids revenge

Ay said he it's well seen it was a Campbell taught ye! It would be a convenient world for them and their sort if there was no such thing as a lad and a gun behind a heather bush! But that's nothing to the point This is what he did

Ay sa d I "come to that"

Well David said he since he couldnae be rid of the loyal commons by fair means he swore he would be rid of them by foul Ardshiel was to starve that was the thing he aimed at And since them that fed him in his exile wouldnae be bought out—right or wrong he would drive them out Therefore he sent for lawyers and papers and red coats to stand at his back And the kindly folk of that country must all pack and tramp every father's son out of his father's house and out of the place where he was bred and fed, and played when he was a callant And who are to succeed them? Bare leggit beggars! King George is to whistle for his rents he maun dow with the less, he can spread his butter thinner what cares Red Colim? If he can hurt Ardshiel he has his wish if he can pluck the meat from my chieftain's table and the bit toys out of his children's hands he will gang hame singing to Glenure!

'Let me have a word said I 'Be sure if they take less rents be sure

Government has a finger in the pie It's not this Campbell's fault man—it's his orders And if he killed this Colin to morrow what better would ye be There would be another factor in his shoes as fast as spur can drive

Yere a good lad in a fight said Alan but man! ye have Whig blood in ye!

He spoke kindly enough but there was so much anger under his contempt that I thought it was wise to change the conversation I expressed my wonder how with the Highlands covered with troops and guarded like a city in a siege a man in his situation could come and go without arrest

It's easier than ye would think said Alan A bare hillside (ye see) is like all one road if there's a sentry at one place ye just go by another And then the heather's a great help And everywhere there are friends houses and friends byres and haystacks And besides when folk talk of a country covered with troops it's but a kind of a byword at the best A soldier covers nae mur of it than his bootsoles I have fished a water with a sentry on the other side of the brae and killed a fine trout and I have sat in a heather bush within six feet of another and learned a really bonny tune from his whistling This was it said he and whistled me the air

And then besides he continued, it's no sae bad now as it was in forty-six The Hielands are what they call pacified Small wonder with never a gun or a sword left from Cartyre to Cape Wrath but what tenty* folk have hidden in their thatch! But what I would like to ken David is just how long? Not long ye would think with men like Ardshiel in exile and men like the Red Fox sitting birling the wine and oppressing the poor at home But it's a little thing to decide what folk'll bear and what they will not Or why would Rea Colin be riding his horse all over my country of Appin and never a pretty lad to put a bullet in him?

And with this Alan fell into a muse, and for a long time sat very sad and silent

I will add the rest of what I have to say about my friend that he was skilled in all kinds of music but principally pipe music, was a well considered poet in his own tongue, had read several books both in French and English was a dead shot a good angler, and an excellent fencer with the small sword as well as with his own particular weapon For all his faults they were on his face and I now knew them all But the worst of them his childish propensity to take offence and to pick quarrels he greatly laid aside in my case out of regard for the battle of the round house But whether it was because I had done well myself or because I had been a witness of his own much greater prowess is more than I can tell For though he had a great taste for courage in other men, yet he admired it most in Alan Breck

*Careful

XIII

THE LOSS OF THE BRIG

IT WAS ALREADY LATE at night and as dark as it ever would be at that season of the year (and that is to say it was still pretty bright) when Hoseason clapped his head into the round house door

Here aid he come out and see if ye can pilot

‘Is this one of your tricks?’ asked Alan

Do I look like tricks?’ cries the captain I have other things to think of—my brig’s in danger’

By the concerned lool of his face and above all by the sharp tones in which he spole of his brig it was plain to both of us he was in deadly earnest and so Alan and I with no great fear of treachery stepped on deck

The sky was clear it blew hard and was bitter cold a great deal of daylight lingered and the moon which was nearly full shone brightly The brig was close hauled so as to round the south west corner of the Island of Mull the hills of which (and Ben More above them all with a wisp of mist upon the top of it) lay full upon the larboard bow Though it was no good point of sailing for the *Covenant*, she tore through the seas at a great rate pitching and straining and pursued by the westerly swell

Altogether it was no such ill night to keep the seas in and I had begun to wonder what it was that sat so heavily upon the captain when the brig rising suddenly on the top of a high swell he pointed and cried to us to look Away on the lee bow a thing like a fountain rose out of the moonlit sea and immediately after we heard a low sound of roaring

What do ye call that?’ asked the captain gloomily

‘The sea breaking on a reef said Alan And now ye ken where it is, and what better would ye have?’

‘Ay said Hoseason if it were the only one

And sure enough just as he spoke there came a second fountain further to the south

There! said Hoseason ‘Ye see for yourself If I had kent of these reefs if I had had a cnart or if Shuan had been spared it’s not sixty guineas no nor six hundred would have made me risk my brig in sic a stoneyard! But you sir that was to pilot us have ye never a word?’

I’m thinking said Alan these ll be what they call the Torran Rocks

‘Are there many of them?’ says the captain

Truly sir I am nae pilot said Alan but it sticks in my mind there are ten miles of them

Mr Riach and the captain looked at each other

There’s a way through them I suppose?’ said the captain

Doubtless said Alan but where? But it somehow runs in my mind once more that it is clearer under the land

So' said Hoseason Well have to haul our wind then Mr Riach we ll have to come as near in about the end of Mull as we can take her sir and even then we ll have the land to keep the wind off us and that stoneyard to our lee Well we're in for it now and may as well crack on

With that he gave an order to the steersman and sent Riach to the foretop There were only five men on deck counting the officers these being all that were fit (or at least both fit and willing) for their work So as I say it fell to Mr Riach to go aloft and he sat there looking out and hailing the deck with news of all he saw

The sea to the south is thick he cried and then after a while it does seem clearer in by the land

Well sir said Hoseason to Alan we'll try your way of it But I think I might as well trust to a blind fiddler Pray God you're right

Pray God I am' says Alan to me But where did I hear it? Well well it will be as it must

As we got nearer to the turn of the land the reefs began to be sown here and there on our very path and Mr Riach sometimes cried down to us to change the course Sometimes indeed none too soon for one reef was so close to the brig's weather board that when a sea burst upon it the lighter sprays fell upon her deck and wetted us like rain

The brightness of the night showed us these perils as clear'y as by day which was perhaps the more alarming It showed me too the face of the captain as he stood by the steersman now on one foot now on the other and sometimes blowing in his hands but still listening and looking and as steady as steel Neither he nor Mr Riach had shown well in the fighting but I saw they were brave in their own trade and admired them all the more because I found Alan very white

Ochone David says he this is no the kind of death I fancy'

What Alan! I cried you're not afraid?

'No said he wetting his lips but you'll allow yourself it's a cold ending'

By this time now and then sheering to one side or the other to avoid a reef but still hugging the wind and the land we had got round Iona and begun to come alongside Mull The tide at the tail of the land ran very strong and threw the brig about Two hands were put to the helm and Hoseason himself would sometimes lend a help and it was strange to see three strong men throw their weight upon the tiller and it (like a living thing) struggle against and drive them back This would have been the greater danger had not the sea been for some while free of obstacles Mr Riach besides announced from the top that he saw clear water ahead

Ye were right said Hoseason to Alan Ye have saved the brig sir I'll mind that when we come to clear accounts And I believe he not only meant what he said but would have done it so high a place did the *Covenant* hold in his affections

But this is matter only for conjecture things having gone otherwise than he forecast

Keep her away a point sings out Mr Riach Reef to windward

And just at the same time the tide caught the brig and threw the wind out of her sails She came round into the wind like a top and the next moment struck the reef with such a dunch as threw us all flat upon the deck and came near to shake Mr Riach from his place upon the mast

I was on my feet in a minute The reef on which we had struck was close in under the south west end of Mull off a little isle they call Earraid which lay low and black upon the larboard Sometimes the swell broke clean over us sometimes it only ground the poor brig upon the reef so that we could hear her beat herself to pieces and what with the great noise of the sails and the singing of the wind and the flying of the spray in the moonlight and the sense of danger I think my head must have been partly turned for I could scarcely understand the things I saw

Presently I observed Mr Riach and the seamen busy around the skiff and still in the same blanl ran over to assist them and as I set my hand to work my mind came clear again It was no very easy task for the skiff lay amidships and was full of hamper and the breaking of the heavier seas continually forced us to give over and hold on but we all wrought like horses while we could

Meanwhile such of the wounded as could came clambering out of the fore scuttle and began to help while the rest that lay helpless in their bunks harrowed me with screaming and begging to be saved

The captain took no part It seemed he was struck stupid He stood holding by the shrouds talking to himself and groaning out loud whenever the ship hammered on the rock His brig was li e wife and child to him he had looked on day by day at the mishandling of poor Ransome but when it came to the brig he seemed to suffer along with her

All the time of our working at the boat I remember only the one thing that I asked Alan looking across at the shore what country it was and he answered it was the worst possible for him for it was a land of the Campbells

We had one of the wounded men told off to keep a watch upon the seas and cry us warning Well we had the boat about ready to be launched when this man sang out pretty shrill For God's sake hold on' We knew by his tone that it was something more than ordinary and sure enough there followed a sea so huge that it lifted the brig right up and canted her over on her beam Whether the cry came too late or my hold was too weak I know not, but at the sudden tilting of the ship I was cast clean over the bulwarks into the sea

I went down and drank my fill and then came up and got a blink of the moon and then down again They say a man sinks a third time for good I cannot be made like other folk then for I would not like to write how often I went down or how often I came up again All the while I was being hurled along and beaten upon and choked and then swallowed whole and the thing was so distracting to my wits that I was neither sorry nor afraid

Presently I found I was holding to a spar which helped me somewhat And then all of a sudden I was in quiet water and began to come to myself

It was the spare yard I had got hold of and I was amazed to see how far I had traveled from the brig I hailed her indced but it was plain she was

already out of cry She was still holding together but whether or not they had yet launched the boat I was too far off and too low down to see

While I was hailing the brig, I spied a tract of water lying between us where no great waves came but which yet boiled white all over and bristled in the moon with rings and bubbles Sometimes the whole tract swung to one side, like the tail of a live serpent sometimes for a glimpse it would all disappear and then boil up again What it was I had no guess which for the time increased my fear of it but I now know it must have been the roost or tide race which had carried me away so fast and tumbled me about so rudely and at last as if tired of that play had flung out me and the spare yard upon its landward margin

I now lay quite becalmed and began to feel that a man can die of cold as well as of drowning The shores of Earraid were close in I could see in the moonlight the dots of heather and the sparkling of the mica in the rocks

Well thought I to myself if I cannot get as far as that it's strange!

I had no skill in swimming Essen Water being small in our neighbourhood but when I laid hold upon the yard with both arms and kicked out with both feet I soon began to find that I was moving Hard work it was and mortally slow but in about an hour of kicking and splashing I had got well in between the points of a sandy bay surrounded by low hills

The sea was here quite quiet there was no sound of any surf the moon shone clear and I thought in my heart I had never seen a place so desert and desolate But it was dry land and when at last it grew so shallow that I could leave the yard and wade ashore upon my feet I cannot tell if I was more tired or more grateful Both at least I was tired as I never was before that night and grateful to God as I trust I have been often, though never with more excuse

XIV

THE ISLET

WITH MY stepping ashore I began the most unhappy part of my adventures It was half past twelve in the morning and though the wind was broken by the land it was a cold night I dared not sit down (for I thought I should have frozen) but took off my shoes and walked to and fro upon the sand barefoot and beating my breast with an infinite weariness There was no sound of man or cattle not a cock crew though it was about the hour of their first waking only the surf broke outside in the distance which put me in mind of my perils and those of my friend To walk by the sea at that hour of the morning and in a place so desert like and lonesome struck me with a kind of fear

As soon as the day began to break I put on my shoes and climbed a hill—the ruggedest scramble I ever undertook—falling the whole way between big blocks of granite or leaping from one to another When I got to the top the dawn was come There was no sign of the brig which must have lifted

from the reef and sunk The boat too was nowhere to be seen There was never a sail upon the ocean and in what I could see of the land was neither house nor man

I was afraid to think what had befallen my shipmates and afraid to look longer at so empty a scene What with my wet clothes and weariness and my belly that now began to ache with hunger I had enough to trouble me without that So I set off eastward along the south coast hoping to find a house where I might warm myself and perhaps get news of those I had lost And at the worst I considered the sun would soon rise and dry my clothes

After a little my way was stopped by a creek or inlet of the sea which seemed to run pretty deep into the land and as I had no means to get across I must needs change my direction to go about the end of it It was still the roughest kind of walking indeed the whole not only of Earraid but of the neighbouring part of Mull (which they call the Ross) is nothing but a jumble of granite rocks with heather in among At first the creek kept narrowing as I had looked to see but presently to my surprise it began to widen out again At this I scratched my head but had still no notion of the truth until at last I came to a rising ground and it burst upon me all in a moment that I was cast upon a little barren isle and cut off on every side by the salt seas

Instead of the sun rising to dry me it came on to rain with a thick mist so that my case was lamentable

I stood in the rain and shivered and wondered what to do till it occurred to me that perhaps the creek was fordable Back I went to the narrowest point and waded in But not three yards from shore I plumped in head over ears and if ever I was heard of more it was rather by God's grace than my own prudence I was no wetter (for that could hardly be) but I was all the colder for this mishap and having lost another hope was the more unhappy

And now all at once the yard came in my head What had carried me through the roost would surely serve me to cross this little quiet creek in safety With that I set off undaunted across the top of the isle to fetch and carry it back It was a weary tramp in all ways and if hope had not buoyed me up I must have cast myself down and given up Whether with the sea salt or because I was growing fevered I was distressed with thirst, and had to stop as I went to drink the peaty water out of the hags

I came to the bay at last more dead than alive and at the first glance I thought the yard was something farther out than when I left it In I went for the third time into the sea The sand was smooth and firm and shelved gradually down so that I could wade out till the water was almost to my neck and the little waves splashed into my face But at that depth my feet began to leave me and I durst venture in no farther As for the yard I saw it bobbing very quietly some twenty feet beyond

I had borne up well until this last disappointment but at that I came ashore and flung myself down upon the sands and wept

The time I spent upon the island is still so horrible a thought to me that I must pass it lightly over In all the books I have read of people cast away,

they had either their pockets full of tools or a chest of things would be thrown upon the beach along with them, as if on purpose My case was very different I had nothing in my pockets but money and Alan's silver button and being inland bred I was as much short of knowledge as of means

I knew indeed that shell fish were counted good to eat and among the rocks of the isle I found a great plenty of limpets which at first I could scarcely strike from their places not knowing quickness to be needful There were besides some of the light shells that we call buckies I think periwinkle is the English name Of these two I made my whole diet devouring them cold and raw as I found them, and so hungry was I that at first they seemed to me delicious

Perhaps they were out of season or perhaps there was something wrong in the sea about my island But at least I had no sooner eaten my first meal than I was seized with giddiness and retching and lay for a long time no better than dead A second trial of the same food (indeed I had no other) did better with me, and revived my strength But as long as I was on the island I never knew what to expect when I had eaten sometimes all was well and sometimes I was thrown into a miserable sickness, nor could I ever distinguish what particular fish it was that hurt me

All day it streamed rain the island ran like a sop there was no dry spot to be found and when I lay down that night between two boulders that made a kind of roof my feet were in a bog

The second day I crossed the island to all sides There was no one part of it better than another it was all desolate and rocky nothing living on it but game birds which I lacked the means to kill and the gulls which haunted the outlying rocks in a prodigious manner But the creek or strait that cut off the isle from the mainland of the Ross opened out on the north into a bay and the bay again opened into the Sound of Iona and it was the neighbourhood of this place that I chose to be my home though if I had thought upon the very name of home in such a spot I must have burst out weeping

I had good reasons for my choice There was in this part of the isle a little hut of a house like a pig's hut, where fishers used to sleep when they came there upon their business but the turf roof of it had fallen entirely in so that the hut was of no use to me and gave me less shelter than my rocks What was more important the shell fish on which I lived grew there in great plenty when the tide was out I could gather a peck at a time and this was doubtless a convenience But the other reason went deeper I had become in no way used to the horrid solitude of the isle but still looked round me on all sides (like a man that was hunted) between fear and hope that I might see some human creature coming Now from a little up the hillside over the bay I could catch a sight of the great ancient church and the roofs of the people's houses in Iona And on the other hand over the low country of the Ross I saw smoke go up, morning and evening as if from a homestead in a hollow of the land

I used to watch this smoke when I was wet and cold and had my head half turned with loneliness and think of the fireside and the company, till my heart

burned It was the same with the roofs of Iona Altogether this sight I had of men's homes and comfortable lives although it put a point on my own sufferings yet it kept hope alive and helped me to eat my raw shell fish (which had soon grown to be a disgust) and saved me from the sense of horror I had whenever I was alone with dead rocks and fowls and the rain, and the cold sea

I say it kept hope alive and indeed it seemed impossible that I should be left to die on the shores of my own country and within view of a church tower and the smoke of men's houses But the second day passed and though as long as the light lasted I kept a bright look out for boats on the Sound or men passing on the Ross no help came near me It still rained and I turned in to sleep as wet as ever and with a cruel sore throat but a little comforted perhaps by having said good night to my next neighbours the people of Iona

Charles the Second declared a man could stay outdoors more days in the year in the climate of England than in any other This was very like a king, with a palace at his back and changes of dry clothes But he must have had better luck on his flight from Worcester than I had on that miserable isle It was the height of summer yet it rained for more than twenty four hours, and did not clear until the afternoon of the third day

This was the day of incidents In the morning I saw a red deer a buck with a fine spread of antlers standing in the rain on the top of the island but he had scarce seen me rise from under my rock before he trotted off upon the other side I supposed he must have swum across the strait though what should bring any creature to Earrail was more than I could fancy

A little after as I was jumping about after limpets I was startled by a guinea piece which fell upon a rock in front of me and glanced off into the sea When the sailors gave me my money again they kept back not only about a third of the whole sum but my father's leather purse so that from that day out I carried my gold loose in a pocket with a button I now saw there must be a hole and clapped my hand to the place in a hurry But this was to lock the stable door after the steed was stolen I had left the shore at Queen's Ferry with near on fifty pounds now I found no more than two guinea pieces and a silver shilling

It is true I picked up a third guinea a little after where it lay shining on a piece of turf That made a fortune of three pounds and four shillings English money for a lad the rightful heir to an estate, and now starving on an isle at the extreme end of the wild Highlands

This state of affairs dashed me still further and indeed my plight on that third morning was truly pitiful My clothes were beginning to rot my stockings in particular were quite worn through so that my shanks went naked my hands had grown quite soft with the continual soaking my throat was very sore, my strength had much abated and my heart so turned against the horrid stuff I was condemned to eat that the very sight of it came near to sicken me

And yet the worse was not yet come

There is a pretty high rock on the northwest of Earrail which (because it had a flat top and overlooked the Sound) I was much in the habit of fre

quenting not that ever I stayed in one place save when asleep my miserv-
ing me no rest Indeed I wore myself down with continual and aimless
goings and comings in the rain

As soon however as the sun came out I lay down on the top of that rock
to dry myself The comfort of the sunshine is a thing I cannot tell It set me
thinking hopefully of my deliverance of which I had begun to despair and I
scanned the sea and the Ross with a fresh interest On the south of my rock
a part of the island jutted out and hid the open ocean so that a boat could
thus come quite near me upon that side and I be none the wiser

Well all of a sudden a coble with a brown sail and a pair of fishers aboard
it came flying round that corner of the isle bound for Iona I shouted out
and then fell on my knees on the rock and reached up my hands and prayed to
them They were near enough to hear—I could even see the colour of their
hair and there was no doubt they observed me for they cried out in the
Gaelic tongue and laughed But the boat never turned aside and flew on, right
before my eyes for Iona

I could not believe such wickedness and ran along the shore from rock to
rock crying piteously even after they were out of reach of my voice I still
cried and waved to them and when they were quite gone I thought my
heart would have burst All the time of my troubles I wept only twice Once
when I could not reach the yard and now the second time when these fishers
turned a deaf ear to my cries But this time I wept and roared like a wicked
child tearing up the turf with my nails and grinding my face in the earth If
a wish would kill men those fishers would never have seen morning and I
should likely have died upon my island

When I was a little over my anger I must eat again but with such loathing
of the mess as I could now scarce control Sure enough I should have done
as well to fast for my fishes poisoned me again I had all my first pains my
throat was so sore I could scarcely swallow I had a fit of strong shuddering
which clutched my teeth together and there came on me that dreadful sense
of illness which we have no name for either in Scotch or English I thought
I should have died and made my peace with God forgiving all men even
my uncle and the fishers and as soon as I had thus made up my mind to the
worst clearness came upon me I observed the night was falling dry my
clothes were dried a good deal truly I was in a better case than ever before
since I had landed on the isle and so I got to sleep at last with a thought of
gratitude

The next day (which was the fourth of this horrible life of mine) I found my
bodily strength run very low But the sun shone the air was sweet and what I
managed to eat of the shell fish agreed well with me and revived my courage

I was scarce back on my rock (where I went always the first thing after I had
eaten) before I observed a boat coming down the Sound and with her head,
as I thought in my direction

I began at once to hope and fear exceedingly for I thought these men
might have thought better of their cruelty and be coming back to my assist-
ance But another disappointment such as yesterday's was more than I could

bear I turned my back accordingly upon the sea and did not look again till I had counted many hundreds The boat was still heading for the island The next time I counted the full thousands as slowly as I could my heart beating so as to hurt me And then it was out of all question She was coming straight to Earraid'

I could no longer hold myself back but ran to the sea side and out from one rock to another as far as I could go It is a marvel I was not drowned for when I was brought to a stand at last my legs shook under me and my mouth was so dry I must wet it with the sea water before I was able to shout.

All this time the boat was coming on and now I was able to perceive it was the same boat and the same two men as yesterday This I knew by their hair which the one had of a bright yellow and the other black But now there was a third man along with them who looked to be of a better class

As soon they were come within easy speech they let down their sail and lay quiet In spite of my supplications they drew no nearer in and what frightened me most of all the new man tee hee'd with laughter as he talked and looked at me

Then he stood up in the boat and addressed me a long while speaking fast and with many wavings of his hand I told him I had no Gaelic and at this he became very angry and I began to suspect he thought he was talking English Listening very close I caught the word whateffer several times, but all the rest was Gaelic and might have been Greek and Hebrew for me

Whatever said I to show him I had caught a word

Yes yes—yes yes says he and then he looked at the other men as much as to say I told you I spoke English and began again as hard as ever in Gaelic

This time I picked out another word tide Then I had a flash of hope I remembered he was always waving his hand towards the mainland of Ross

'Do you mean when the tide is out—?' I cried and could not finish

'Yes yes said he Tide

At that I turned tail upon the boat (where my adviser had once more begun to tee hee with laughter) leaped back the way I had come from one stone to another and set off running across the isle as I had never run before In about half an hour I came out upon the shores of the creek and sure enough it was shrunk into a little trickle of water through which I dashed, not above my knees and landed with a shout on the main island

A sea bred boy would not have stayed a day on Earraid which is only what they call a tidal islet and except in the bottom of the neaps can be entered and left twice in every twenty four hours either dry shod or at the most by wading Even I who had the tide going out and in before me in the bay and even watched for the ebbs the better to get my shell fish—even I (I say) if I had sat down to think instead of raging at my fate must have soon guessed the secret, and got free It was no wonder the fishers had not understood me The wonder was rather that they had ever guessed my pitiful illusion and taken the trouble to come back I had starved with cold and hunger on that island for close upon one hundred hours But for the fishers, I might

have left my bones there in pure folly And even as it was I had paid for it pretty dear not only in past sufferings but in my present case being clothed like a beggar man scarce able to walk and in great pain of my sore throat

I have seen wicked men and fools a great many of both, and I believe they both get paid in the end but the fools first

XV

THE LAD WITH THE SILVER BUTTON
THROUGH THE ISLE OF MULL

THE Ross of Mull which I had now got upon was rugged and trackless like the isle I had just left being all bog and brier and big stone There may be roads for them that know the country well but for my part I had no better guide than my own nose and no other landmark than Ben More

I aimed as well as I could for the smoke I had seen so often from the island and with all my great weariness and the difficulty of the way came upon the house in the bottom of a little hollow about five or six at night It was low and longish rooted with turf and built of unmortared stones and on a mound in front of it an old gentleman sat smoking his pipe in the sun

With what little English he had he gave me to understand that my shipmates had got safe ashore, and had broken bread in that very house on the day after

Was there one I asked 'dressed like a gentleman?'

He said they all wore rough great coats but to be sure the first of them, the one that came alone wore breeches and stockings while the rest had sailors trousers

Ah said I and he would have a feathered hat'

He told me no that he was bareheaded like myself

At first I thought Alan might have lost his hat and then the rain came in my mind and I judged it more likely he had it out of harm's way under his great coat This set me smiling partly because my friend was safe partly to think of his vanity in dress

And then the old gentleman clapped his hand to his brow and cried out that I must be the lad with the silver button

Why yes! said I in some wonder

Well then said the old gentleman I have a word for you that you are to follow your friend to his country by Torosay

He then asked me how I had fared and I told him my tale A south country man would certainly have laughed but this old gentleman (I call him so because of his manners for his clothes were dropping off his back) heard me all through with nothing but gravity and pity When I had done he took me by the hand led me into his hut (it was no better) and presented me before his wife as if she had been the Queen and I a duke

The good woman set oat bread before me and a cold grouse patting my

shoulder and smiling to me all the time for she had no English and the old gentleman (not to be behind) brewed me a strong punch out of their country spirit All the while I was eating and after that when I was drinking the punch I could scarce come to believe in my good fortune and the house though it was thick with the peat smoke and as full of holes as a colander seemed like a palace

The punch threw me in a strong sweat and a deep slumber the good people let me lie and it was near noon of the next day before I took the road my throat already easier and my spirits quite restored by good fare and good news The old gentleman although I pressed him hard would take no money and gave me an old bonnet for my head though I'm free to own I was no sooner out of view of the house than I very zealously washed this gift of his in a wayside fountain

Thought I to myself If these are the wild Highlanders I could wish my own foll wif er

I not only started late but I must have wandered nearly half the time True I met plenty of people grubbing in little miserable fields that would not keep a cat or herding little kine about the bigness of asses The Highland dress being forbidden by law since the rebellion and the people condemned to the Lowland habit which they much disliked it was strange to see the variety of their array Some went bare only for a hanging cloak or great coat and carried their trousers on their backs like a useless burthen some had made an imitation of the tartan with little parti co'oured stripes patched together like an old wife's quilt others again still wore the Highland philabeg but by putting a few stitches between the legs transformed it into a pair of trousers like a Dutchman's All those makeshifts were condemned and punished for the law was harshly applied in hopes to break the clan spirit but in that out of the way sea bound isle there were few to make remarks and fewer to tell tales

They seemed in great poverty which was no doubt natural now that rapine was put down and the chiefs kept no longer to an open house and the roads (even such a winding country by track as the one I followed) were infested with beggars And here again I mark a difference from my own part of the country For our I found beggars—even the gownsmen themselves who beg by right—had a louting flitting way with them and if you gave them a pice and asked change would very civilly return you a boddle But these Highland beggars stood on their dignity asked alms only to buy snuff (by their account) and would give no change

To be sure this was no concern of mine except in so far as it entertained me by the way What was much more to the purpose few had any English and these few (unless they were of the brotherhood of beggars) not very anxious to place it at my service I knew Torosay to be my destination and repeated the name to them and pointed but instead of simply pointing in reply they would give me a screech of Gaelic that set me foolish so it was small wonder if I went out of my road as often as I stayed in it

At last about eight at night and already very weary I came to a lone house

where I asked admittance and was refused until I bethought me of the power of money in so poor a country and held up one of my guineas in my finger and thumb Thereupon the man of the house who had hitherto pretended to have no English and driven me from his door by signals suddenly began to speak as clearly as was needful and agreed for five shillings to give me a night's lodging and guide me the next day to Torosay

I slept uneasy that night fearing I should be robbed but I might have spared myself the pain for my host was no robber only miserably poor and a great cheat He was not alone in his poverty for the next morning we must go five miles about to the house of what he called a rich man to have one of my guineas changed This was perhaps a rich man for Mull he would have scarce been thought so in the south for it took all he had—the whole house was turned upside down and a neighbour brought under contribution, before he could scrape together twenty shillings in silver The odd shilling he kept for himself protesting that he could ill afford to have so great a sum of money lying locked up For all that he was very courteous and well spoken made us both sit down with his family to dinner and brewed punch in a fine china bowl over which my rascal guide grew so merry that he refused to start

I was for getting angry and appealed to the rich man (Hector Maclean was his name) who had been a witness to our bargain and to my payment of the five shillings But Maclean had taken his share of the punch and vowed that no gentleman should leave his table after the bowl was brewed so there was nothing for it but to sit and hear Jacobite toasts and Gaelic songs till all were tipsy and staggered off to bed or the barn for their night's rest

Next day (the fourth of my travels) we were up before five upon the clock but my rascal guide got to the bottle at once and it was three hours before I had him clear of the house and then (as you shall hear) only for a worse disappointment

As long as we went down a heathery valley that lay before Mr Maclean's house all went well only my guide looked constantly over his shoulder and when I asked him the cause only grinned at me No sooner, however had we crossed the back of the hill and got out of sight of the house windows than he told me Torosay lay right in front and that hill-top (which he pointed out) was my best landmark

I care very little for that said I since you are going with me

The impudent cheat answered me in the Gaelic that he had no English

My fine fellow I said I know very well your English comes and goes Tell me what will bring it back? Is it more money you wish?

Five shillings mair said he and hersel will bring ye there

I reflected a while and then offered him two which he accepted greedily and insisted on having in his hand at once—for luck he said, but I think it was rather my misfortune

The two shillings carried him not quite as many miles at the end of which distance he sat down upon the wayside and took off his brogans from his feet, like a man about to rest

I was red hot Ha' said I have you no more English?

He said impudently No

At that I boiled over and lifted my hand to strike him and he drawing a knife from his rags squatted back and grinned at me like a wild cat At that forgetting every thing but my anger I ran in upon him put aside his knife with my left and struck him in the mouth with the right I was a strong lad and very angry and he but a little man and he went down before me heavily By good luck his knife flew out of his hand as he fell

I picked up both that and his brogues wished him a good morning and set off upon my way leaving him bare foot and disarmed I chuckled to myself as I went being sure I had done with that rogue for a variety of reasons First he knew he could have no more of my money next the brogues were worth in that country only a few pence and lastly the knure which was really a dagger it was against the law for him to carry

In about half-an hour of walk I overtook a great ragged man moving pretty fast but feeling before him with a staff He was quite blind and told me he was a catechist which should have put me at my ease But his face went against me it seemed dark and dangerous and secret and presently as we began to go on alongside I saw the steel butt of a pistol sticking from under the flap of his coat pocket To carry such a thing meant a fine of fifteen pounds sterling upon a first offence and transportation to the colonies upon a second Nor could I quite see why a religious teacher should go armed or what a blind man could be doing with a pistol

I told him about my guide for I was proud of what I had done and my vanity for once got the heels of my prudence At the mention of the five shillings he cried so loud that I made up my mind I should say nothing of the other two and was glad he could not see my blushes

Was it too much? I asked a little faltering

Too much! cries he Why I will guide you to Torosay myself for a dram of brandy And give you the great pleasure of my company (me that is a man of some learning) in the bargain

I said I did not see how a blind man could be a guide but at that he laughed aloud and said his stick was eyes enough for an eagle

In the Isle of Mull at least says he where I knew every stone and heather bush by mark of head See now he said striking right and left as if to make sure down there a burn is running and at the head of it there stands a bit of small hill with a stone cocked on the top of that, and it's hard at the foot of the hill that the way runs by to Torosay and the way here being for droves is plainly trodden and will show grassy through the heather

I had to own he was right in every feature and told my wonder

Ha' says he that's nothing Would ye believe me now that before the Act came out and when there were weepoms in this country I could shoot Ay could I! cries he and then with a leer If ye have such a thing as a pistol here to try with I would show ye how it's done

I told him I had nothing of the sort and gave him a wider berth If he had known his pistol stuck out at the time quite plainly out of his pocket and I

could see the sun twinkle on the steel of the butt But by the better luck for me he knew nothing thought all was covered and lied on in the dark

He then began to question me cunningly where I came from whether I was rich whether I could change a five shilling piece for him (which he declared he had that moment in his sporran) and all the time he kept edging up to me and I avoiding him We were now upon a sort of green cattle track which crossed the hill towards Torosay and we kept changing sides upon that like dancers in a reel I had so plainly the upper hand that my spirits rose and indeed I took a pleasure in this game of blind man's bluff but the catechist grew angrier and angrier and at last began to swear in Gaelic and to strike for my legs with his staff

Then I told him that sure enough I had a pistol in my pocket as well as he and if he did not strike across the hill due south I would even blow his brains out

He became at once very polite and after trying to soften me for some time but quite in vain he cursed me once more in Gaelic and took himself off I watched him striding along through bog and brier tapping with his stick until he turned the end of a hill and disappeared in the next hollow Then I truck on again for Torosay much better pleased to be alone than to travel with that man of learning This was an unlucky day and these two of whom I had just rid myself one after the other were the two worst men I met with in the Highlands

At Torosay on the Sound of Mull and looking over to the mainland of Morven there was an inn with an inn keeper who was a Maclean it appeared of a very high family for to keep an inn is thought even more genteel in the Highlands than it is with us perhaps as partaking of hospitality or perhaps because the trade is idle and drunken He spoke good English and finding me to be something of a scholar tried me first in French where he easily beat me, and then in Latin in which I don't know which of us did best This pleasant rivalry put us at once upon friendly terms and I sat up and drank punch with him (or to be more correct, sat up and watched him drink it) until he was so tipsy that he wept on my shoulder

I tried him as if by accident with a sight of Alans button but it was plain he had never seen or heard of it Indeed he bore some grudge against the family and friends of Ardshiel and before he was drunk he read me a lampoon in very good Latin but with a very ill meaning which he had made in elegiac verses upon a person of that house

When I told him of my catechist he shook his head and said I was lucky to have got off That is a very dangerous man he said Duncan Mackeigh is his name he can shoot by the ear at several yards and has often been accused of highway robberies and once of a murder

The cream of it is says I that he called himself a catechist '

And why should he not? says he 'when that is what he is It was Maclean of Duart gave it to him because he was blind But perhaps it was a peety says my host, for he is always on the road going from one place to another to

hear the young folk say their religion, and, doubtless that is a great temptation to the poor man

At last, when my landlord could drink no more he showed me to a bed, and I lay down in very good spirits, having travelled the greater part of that big and crooked Island of Mull from Earraid to Torosay fifty miles as the crow flies, and (with my wanderings) much nearer to a hundred, in four days and with little fatigue. Indeed I was by far in better heart and health of body at the end of that long tramp than I had been at the beginning.

XVI

THE LAD WITH THE SILVER BUTTON ACROSS MORVEN

THERE is a regular ferry from Torosay to Kinlochaline on the mainland. Both shores of the Sound are in the country of the strong clan of the Macleans, and the people that passed the ferry with me were almost all of that clan. The skipper of the boat on the other hand was called Neil Roy Macrob and since Macrob was one of the names of Alan's clansmen, and Alan himself had sent me to that ferry I was eager to come to private speech of Neil Roy.

In the crowded boat this was of course impossible and the passage was a very slow affair. There was no wind, and as the boat was wretchedly equipped we could pull but two oars on one side and one on the other. The men gave way however with a good will the passengers taking spells to help them and the whole company giving the time in Gaelic boat songs. And what with the songs and the sea air and the good-nature and spirit of all concerned, and the bright weather the passage was a pretty thing to have seen.

But there was one melancholy part. In the mouth of Loch Aline we found a great sea-going ship at anchor and this I supposed at first to be one of the King's cruisers which were kept along the coast both summer and winter to prevent communication with the French. As we got a little nearer it became plain she was a ship of merchandise and what still more puzzled me not only her decks but the sea-beach also, were quite black with people and the skiffs were continually plying to and fro between them. Yet nearer and there began to come to our ears a great sound of mourning the people on board and those on the shore crying and lamenting one to another so as to pierce the heart.

Then I understood this was an emigrant ship bound for the American colonies.

We put the ferry boat alongside and the exiles leaned over the bulwarks weeping and reaching out their hands to my fellow passengers among whom they counted some near friends. How long this might have gone on I do not know for they seemed to have no sense of time but at last the captain of the ship who seemed near beside himself (and no great wonder) in the midst of this crying and confusion, came to the side and begged us to depart.

Thereupon Neil sheered off and the chief singer in our boat struck into a melancholy air, which was presently taken up both by the emigrants and their

friends upon the beach so that it sounded from all sides like a larent for the diving I saw the tears run down the cheeks of men and women in the boat even as they bent at the oars and the circumstances and the music of the song (which is one called Lochaber no more) were highly affecting even to myself

At Kinlochaline I got Neil Roy upon one side on the beach and said I made sure he was one of Appin's men

And what for no' said he

I am seeking somebody said I, and it comes to my mind that you will have news of him Alan Breck Stewart is his name And very foolishly instead of showing him the button I sought to pass a shilling in his hand

At this he drew back I am very much affronted he said and this is not the way that one shentleman should behave to another at all The man ye ask for is in France but if he was in my sporran says he and your belly full of shillings I would not hurt a hair upon his body

I saw I had gone the wrong way to work and without wasting time upon apologies showed him the button lying in the hollow of my palm

A weel aweel said Neil and I think ye might have begun with that end of the stick whatever! But if ye are the lad with the silver button all is well, and I have the word to see that ye come safe But if ye will pardon me to speak plainly says he there is a name that you should never take into your mouth and that is the name of Alan Breck and there is a thing that ye would never do and that is to offer your dirty money to a Hieland shentleman

It was not very easy to apologise for I could scarce tell him (what was the truth) that I had never dreamed he would set up to be a gentleman until he told me so Neil on his part had no wish to prolong his dealings with me only to fulfil his orders and be done with it, and he made haste to give my route This was to lie the night in Kinlochaline in the public inn to cross Morven the next day to Ardgour and lie the night in the house of one John of Claymore who was warned that I might come the third day to be set across one loch at Corran and another at Balachulish and then ask my way to the house of James of the Glens at Aucharn in Duror of Appin There was a good deal of ferrying as you hear the sea in all this part running deep into the mountains and winding about their roots It makes the country strong to hold and difficult to travel but full of prodigious wild and dreadful prospects

I had some other advice from Neil to speak with no one by the way to avoid Whigs Campbells and the red soldiers to leave the road and lie in a bush if I saw any of the latter coming for it was never chancy to meet in with them and in brief to conduct myself like a robber or a Jacobite agent, as perhaps Neil thought me

The inn at Kinlochaline was the most beggarly vile place that ever pigs were styed in full of smoke vermin and silent Highlanders I was not only discontented with my lodging but with myself for my mismanagement of Neil and thought I could hardly be worse off But very wrongly as I was soon to see for I had not been half an hour at the inn (standing in the door most of the time to ease my eyes from the peat smoke) when a thunderstorm came close

by the springs brole in a little hill on which the inn stood, and one end of the house became a running water. Places of public entertainment were bad enough all over Scotland in those days yet it was a wonder to myself when I had to go from the fireside to the bed in which I slept wading over the shoes

Early in my next morning's journey I overtook a little stout, solemn man, walking very slowly with his toes turned out sometimes reading in a book and sometimes marking the place with his finger, and dressed decently and plainly in something of clerical style

This I found to be another catechist but of a different order from the blind man of Mull being indeed one of those sent out by the Edinburgh Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge to evangelise the more savage places of the Highlands. His name was Henderland he spoke with the broad south country tongue which I was beginning to weary for the sound of and besides common countryship we soon found we had a more particular bond of interest. For my good friend the minister of Issendean had translated into the Gaelic in his time a number of hymns and pious books which Henderland used in his work and held in great esteem. Indeed it was one of these he was carrying and reading when we met

We fell in company at once our ways lying together as far as to Kingairloch. As he went he stopped and spoke with all the wayfarers and workers that we met or passed and though of course I could not tell what they discoursed about yet I judged Mr Henderland must be well liked in the countryside for I observed many of them to bring out their mulls and share a pinch of snuff with him

I tol him as far in my affairs as I judged wise as far that is as they were none of Alin's and gave him a hint as the place I was traveling to to meet a friend to I thought Auchin or even Duror would be too particular, and might put him on the scent

On his part he told me much of his work and the people he worked among the hating, priests and Jacobites the Disarming Act the dress and many other curiosities of the time and place. He seemed moderate blaming Parliament in several points and especially because they had framed the Act more severely against those who wore the dress than against those who carried weapons

This moderation put it in my mind to question him of the Red Fox and the Appin tenants questions which I thought would seem natural enough in the mouth of one traveling to that country

He said it was a bad business. It's wonderful said he where the tenants find the money for their life is mere starvation (Ye don't carry such a thing as that do ye Mr Balfour? No Well I'm better wanting it) But these tenants (as I was saying) are doubtless partly driven to it James Stewart in Duror (that's him they call James of the Crows) is half brother to Ardshiel the captain of the clan and he is a man much looked up to and drives very hard. And then there's one they call Alin Breel —

Ah cried I what of him?

Whit of the wind that bloweth where it listeth?" said Henderland He's here and awa' here to day and gone to morrow a fair heather coat He might

be glowering at the two of us out of yon whin bush and I woudnae wonder' Ye'll ro carry such a thing as snuff will ve

I told him no and that he had asked the same thing more than once

It's highly possible said he sighing But it seems strange ye shouldnae carry it However as I was saying this Alan Breck is a bold desperate customer and well kent to be James's right hand His life is forfeit already he would boggle at naething and maybe if a tenant body was to hang back he would get a dirk in his warne

You make a poor story of it all Mr Henderland said I If it is all fear upon both sides I care to hear no more of it

No said Mr Henderland but there's love too and self denial that should put the like of you and me to shame There's something fine about it no perhaps Christian but humanly fine Even Alan Breck by all that I hear is a child to be respected There's many a lying sneck draw sits in kirk in our own part of the country and stands well in the world's eye and maybe is a far worse man Mr Balfour than yon misguided shedder of man's blood Ay ay we might take a lesson by them—Ye'll perhaps think I've been too long in the Hielands' he added smiling to me

I told him not at all that I had seen much to admire among the Highlanders and if he came to that Mr Campbell himself was a Highlander

Ay said he that's true It's a fine blood

And what is the King's agent about? I asked

Colin Campbell? says Henderland Putting his head in a bees byke!

He is to turn the tenants out by force I hear? said I

Yes says he but the business has gone back and forth as folks say First, James of the Glens rode to Edinburgh and got some lawyer (a Stewart nae doubt—they all hing together like bats in a steeple) and had the proceedings stayed And then Colin Campbell cam in again and had the upper hand before the Barons of Exchequer And now they tell me the first of the tenants are to fit to morrow It's to begin at Duror under James's very windows, which does nae seem wise by my humble way of it

Do you think they'll fight? I asked

Well says Henderland they're disarmed—or supposed to be—for there's still a good deal of cold iron lying by in quiet places And then Colin Campbell has the sogers coming But for all that if I was his lady wife I would nae be well pleased till I got him home again They're queer customers the Appin Stewarts

I asked if they were worse than their neighbours

No they says he and that's the worst part of it For if Colin Roy can get his business done in Appin he has it all to begin again in the next country which they call Mamore and which is one of the countries of the Camerons He's King's factor upon both and from both he had to drive out the tenants and indeed Mr Balfour (to be open with ye) it's my belief that if he escapes the one lot he'll get his death by the other

So we continued talking and walking the great part of the day until at last Mr Henderland after expressing his delight in my company, and satisfaction

in meeting with a friend of Mr Campbell's ('whom says he 'I will make bold to call that sweet singer of our covenanted Zion') proposed that I should make a short stage and lie the night in his house a little beyond Kingairloch To say truth I was overjoyed for I had no great desire for John of the Claymore and since my double misadventure first with the guide and next with the gentleman slipp'r I stood in some fear of any Highland stranger Accordingly we shook hands upon the bargain and came in the afternoon to a small house standing alone by the shore of the Linnhe Loch The sun was already gone from the desert mountains of Ardgour upon the hither side but shone on those of Appin on the farther the loch lay as still as a lake only the gulls were crying round the sides of it and the whole place seemed solemn and uncouth

We had no sooner come to the door of Mr Henderland's dwelling than to my great surprise (for I was now used to the politeness of the Highlanders) he burst rudely past me dashed into the room caught up a jar and a small horn spoon and began ladling snuff into his nose in most excessive quantities Then he had a hearty fit of sneezing and looked round upon me with a rather silly smile

It's a vow I took' says he I took a vow upon me that I wouldnae carry it Doubtless it's a great privation but when I think upon the martyrs not only to the Scottish Covenant but to other points of Christianity I think shame to mind it'

As soon as we had eaten (and porridge and whey was the best of the good man's diet) he took a grave face and said he had a duty to perform by Mr Campbell and that was to inquire into my state of mind towards God I was inclined to smile at him since the business of the snuff but he had not spoken long before he brought the tears into my eyes There are two things that men should never weary of goodness and humility we get none too much of them in this rough world among cold proud people but Mr Henderland had their very speech upon his tongue And though I was a good deal puffed up with my adventures and with having come off as the saying is with flying colours, yet he soon had me on my knees beside a simple poor man and both proud and glad to be there

Before we went to bed he offered me sixpence to help me on my way out of a scanty store he kept in the turf wall of his house at which excess of goodness I knew not what to do But at last he was so earnest with me that I thought it the more mannerly part to let him have his way, and so left him poorer than myself

XVII

THE DEATH OF THE "RED FOX"

THE NEXT DAY Mr Henderland found for me a man who had a boat of his own and was to cross the Linnhe Loch that afternoon into Appin fishing Him he prevailed on to take me for he was one of his flock, and in this way I saved

a long day's travel and the price of two public ferries I must otherwise have passed

It was near noon before we set out a dark day with clouds and the sun shining upon little patches The sea was here very deep and still and had scarce a wave upon it so that I must put the water to my lips before I could believe it to be truly salt The mountains on either side were high rough and barren very black and gloomy in the shadows of the clouds but all silver-laced with little watercourses where the sun shone upon them It seemed a hard country, this of Appin for people to care as much about as Alan did

There was but one thing to mention A little after we had started the sun shone upon a little moving clump of scarlet close in along the waterside to the north It was much of the same red as soldiers coats every now and then too, there came little sparks and lightnings as though the sun had struck upon bright steel

I asked my boatman what it should be and he answered he supposed it was some of the red soldiers coming from Fort William into Appin against the poor tenantry of the country Well it was a sad sight to me and whether it was because of my thoughts of Alan or from something prophetic in my bosom although this was but the second time I had seen King George's troops had no good will for them

At last we came so near the point of land at the entering in of Loch Leven that I begged to be set on shore My boatman (who was an honest fellow and mindful of his promise to the catechist) would fain have carried me on to Balachulish but as this was to take me farther from my secret destination I insisted and was set on shore at last under the wood of Lettermore (or Lettervore for I have heard it both ways) in Alan's country of Appin

This was a wood of birches growing on a steep craggy side of a mountain that overhung the loch It had many openings and ferny howes and a road or bridle track ran north and south through the midst of it by the edge of which where was a spring I sat down to eat some oat bread of Mr Henderland's and think upon my situation

Here I was not only troubled by a cloud of stinging midges but far more by the doubts of my mind What I ought to do why I was going to join myself with an outlaw and a would be murderer like Alan whether I should not be acting more like a man of sense to tramp back to the south country direct by my own guidance and at my own charges and what Mr Campbell or even Mr Henderland would think of me if they should ever learn my folly and presumption these were the doubts that now began to come in on me stronger than ever

As I was so sitting and thinking a sound of men and horses came to me through the wood, and presently after at a turning of the road I saw four travellers come into view The way was in this part so rough and narrow that they came single and led their horses by the reins The first was a great red-headed gentleman of an imperious and flushed face who carried his hat in his hand and fanned himself for he was in a breathing heat The second by his decent black garb and white wig, I correctly took to be a lawyer The third

was a servant and wore some part of his clothes in tartan which showed that his master was of a Highland family and either an outlaw or else in singular good odour with the Government since the wearing of tartan was against the Act If I had been better versed in these things I would have known the tartan to be of the Argyle (or Campbell) colours This servant had a good sized port manteau strapped on his horse and a net of lemons (to brew punch with) hanging at the saddle bow, as was often enough the custom of luxurious travelers in that part of the country

As for the fourth who brought up the tail, I had seen his like before, and knew him at once to be a sheriff's officer

I had no sooner seen these people coming than I made up my mind (for no reason that I can tell) to go through with my adventure and when the first came alongside of me, I rose up from the bracken and asked him the way to Aucharn

He stopped and looked at me as I thought a little oddly and then, turning to the lawyer Mungo said he there's many a man would think this more of a warning than two pyats Here am I on my road to Duror on the job ye ken and here is a young lad starts up out of the bracken and speers if I ar on the way to Auchain

Glenure said the other this is an ill subject for jesting'

These two had now drawn close up and were gazing at me, while the two followers had halted about a stone cast in the rear

And what seek ye in Aucharn? said Colin Roy Campbell of Glenure, him they called the Red Fox, for he it was that I had stopped

The man that lives there said I

James of the Glens says Glenure musingly, and then to the lawyer 'Is he gathering his people think ye'

Anyway says the lawyer we shall do better to bide where we are, and let the soldiers rally us

If you are concerned for me said I I am neither of his people nor yours, but an honest subject of King George owing no man and fearing no man

Why very well said replies the Factor But if I may make so bold as asl what does this honest man so far from his country? and why does he come seeking the brother of Ardshiel? I have power here I must tell you I am King's Factor upon several of these estates and have twelve files of soldiers at my bick

I have heard a waif word in the country said I, a little nettled, that you were a hard man to drive

He still kept looking at me as if in doubt

Well said he at last your tongue is bold but I am no unfriend to plainness If ye had asl ed me the way to the door of James Stewart on any othe day but this I would have set ye right and bidden ye God speed But today-eh Mungo? And he turned again to lool at the lawyer

But just as he turned there came the shot of a firelock from higher up the hill and with the very sound of it Glenure fell upon the road

O I am dead! he cried several times over

The lawyer had caught him up and held him in his arms the servant standing over and clasping his hands And now the wounded man looked from one to another with scared eyes and there was a change in his voice that went to the heart

Take care of yourselves says he I am dead

He tried to open his clothes as if to look for the wound but his fingers slipped on the buttons With that he gave a great sigh, his head rolled on his shoulders and he passed away

The lawyer said never a word but his face was as sharp as a pen and as white as the dead man's the servant broke out into a great noise of crying and weeping like a child and I on my side stood staring at them in a kind of horror The sheriff's officer had run back at the first sound of the shot, to hasten the coming of the soldiers

At last the lawyer laid down the dead man in his blood upon the road and got to his own feet with a kind of stagger

I believe it was his movement that brought me to my senses for he had no sooner done so than I began to scramble up the hill, crying out, 'The murderer! the murderer!'

So little a time had elapsed that when I got to the top of the first steepness and could see some part of the open mountain the murderer was still moving away at no great distance He was a big man in a black coat, with metal buttons and carried a long fowling piece

'Here! I cried I see him'

At that the murderer gave a little quick look over his shoulder and began to run The next moment he was lost in a fringe of birches then he came out again on the upper side where I could see him climbing like a jackanapes for that part was again very steep and then he dipped behind a shoulder and I saw him no more

All this time I had been running on my side and had got a good way up when a voice cried upon me to stand

I was at the edge of the upper wood and so now, when I halted and looked back I saw all the open part of the hill below me

The lawyer and the sheriff's officer were standing just above the road crying and waving on me to come back and on their left the red coats, musket in hand were beginning to struggle singly out of the lower wood

Why should I come back? I cried Come you on!

'Ten pounds if ye take that lad!' cried the lawyer He's an accomplice He was posted here to hold us in talk

At that word (which I could hear quite plainly, though it was to the soldiers and not to me that he was crying it) my heart came in my mouth with quite a new kind of terror Indeed it is one thing to stand the danger of your life, and quite another to run the peril of both life and character The thing besides had come so suddenly, like thunder out of a clear sky, that I was all amazed and helpless

The soldiers began to spread some of them to run, and others to put up their pieces and cover me, and still I stood

Jonk* in here among the trees ' said a voice close by
 Indeed, I scarce knew what I was doing but I obeyed, and as I did so I heard
 the firelocks bang and the balls whistle in the birches

Just inside the shelter of the trees I found Alan Breck standing with a
 fishing rod He gave me no salutation indeed it was no time for civilities only
 Come' says he and set off running along the side of the mountain towards
 Balachulish and I like a sheep to follow him

Now we ran among the birches now stooping behind low humps upon the
 mountain side now crawling on all fours among the heather The pace was
 deadly my heart seemed bursting against my ribs and I had neither time to
 think nor breath to speak with Only I remember seeing with wonder that
 Alan every now and then would straighten himself to his full height and look
 back and every time he did so, there came a great faraway cheering and crying
 of the soldiers

Quarter of an hour later Alan stopped clapped down flat in the heather and
 turned to me Now said he it's earnest Do as I do for your life

And at the same speed but now with infinitely more precaution we traced
 back again across the mountain side by the same way that we had come only
 perhaps higher till at last Alan threw himself down in the upper wood of
 Lettermore where I had found him at the first and lay, with his face in the
 bracken, panting like a dog

My own sides so ached my head so swam my tongue so hung out of my
 mouth with heat and dryness that I lay beside him like one dead

XVIII

I TALK WITH ALAN IN THE WOOD OF LETTERMORE

ALAN WAS THE FIRST to come round He rose, went to the border of the wood,
 peered out a little and then returned and sat down

Well said he yon was a hot burst David

I said nothing nor so much as lift my face I had seen murder done, and a
 great, ruddy jovial gentleman struck out of life in a moment the pity of that
 sight was still sore within me and yet that was but a part of my concern Here
 was murder done upon the man Alan hated, here was Alan skulking in the trees
 and running from the troops and whether his was the hand that fired or only
 the head that ordered signified but little By my way of it my only friend in
 that wild country was blood guilty in the first degree I held him in horror,
 I could not look upon his face I would have rather lain alone in the rain on
 my cold isle than in that warm wood beside a murderer

Are ye still wearied? he asked again.

No said I still with my face in the bracken "no I am not wearied and
 I can speak. You and me must twine, † I said I liked you very well, Alan but

*Duck

†Part

your ways are not mine and they're not God's and the short and the long of it is just that we must twine

I will hardly twine from ye David without some kind of reason for the same said Alan mighty gravely If ye ken anything against my reputation it's the least thing that ye should do for old acquaintance sake to let me hear the name of it and if ye have only taken a distaste to my society it will be proper for me to judge if I'm insulted

Alan said I what is the sense of this? Ye ken very well yon Campbell man lies in his blood upon the road

He was silent for a little then says he Did ever ye hear tell of the story of the Man and the Good People —by which he meant the fairies

No said I nor do I want to hear it

With your permission Mr Balfour I will tell it you whatever ' says Alan The man ye should ken was cast upon a rock in the sea where it appears the Good People were in use to come and rest as they went through to Ireland The name of this rock is called the Skerryvore and it's not far from where we suffered shipwreck Well it seems the man cried so sore if he could just see his little bairn before he died' that at last the king of the Good People took peety upon him and sent one flying that brought back the bairn in a poke* and laid it down beside the man where he lay sleeping So when the man woke there was a poke beside him and something into the inside of it that moved Well it seems he was one of these gentry that think aye the worst of things, and for greater security he stuck his dirk throughout that poke before he opened it and there was his bairn dead I am thinking to myself Mr Balfour, that you and the man are very much alike

Do you mean you had no hand in it? cried I sitting up

I will tell you first of all, Mr Balfour of Shaws as one friend to another said Alan that if I were going to kill a gentleman it would not be in my own country to bring trouble on my clan and I would not go wanting sword and gun and with a long fishing rod upon my back

Well said I that's true!

And now continued Alan taking out his dirk and laying his hand upon it in a certain manner I swear upon the holy Iron I had neither art nor part, act nor thought in it

I thank God for that! cried I and offered him my hand

He did not appear to see it

And here is a great deal of work about a Campbell! said he They are not so scarce that I ken'

At least said I you cannot justly blame me for you know very well what you told me in the brig But the temptation and the act are different I thank God again for that We may all be tempted but to take a life in cold blood Alan! And I could say no more for the momert And do you know who did it? I added Do you know that man in the black coat?

I have nae clear mind about his coat said Alan cunningly, but it sticks in my head that it was blue

*Bag

Blue or black did ye know him? said I

I couldnae just conscientiously swear to him says Alan He gaed very close by me to be sure but it's a strange thing that I should just ha'e been tying my brogues

Can you swear that you don't know him Alan? I cried half angered half in a mind to laugh at his evasions

No yet says he but I've a grand memory for forgetting David

And yet there was one thing I saw clearly said I and that was that you exposed yourself and me to draw the soldiers

It's very likely said Alan and so would any gentleman You and me were innocent of that transaction

The better reason since we were falsely suspected that we should get clear I cried The innocent should surely come before the guilty

Why David said he the innocent have aye a chance to get assailed in court but for the lad that shot the bullet I think the best place for him will be the heather Them that havenae dipped their hands in any little difficulty should be very mindful of the case of them that have And that is the good Christianity For if it was the other way round about and the lad whom I couldnae just clearly see had been in our shoes and we in his (as might very well have been) I think we would be a good deal obliged to him ourselves if he would draw the soldiers

When it came to this I gave Alan up But he looked so innocent all the time and was in such clear good faith in what he said and so ready to sacrifice himself for what he deemed his duty that my mouth was closed Mr Henderland's words came back to me that we ourselves might take a lesson by these wild Highlanders Well here I had taken mine Alan's morals were all tail first but he was ready to give his life for them such as they were

Alan said I I'll not say it's the good Christianity as I understand it, but it's good enough And here I offer ye my hand for the second time

Whereupon he gave me both of his saying surely I had cast a spell upon him for he could forgive me anything Then he grew very grave and said we had not much time to throw away but must both flee that country he because he was a deserter and the whole of Appin would now be searched like a chamber and every one obliged to give a good account of himself and I because I was certainly involved in the murder

O' says I willing to give him a little lesson I have no fear of the justice of my country

As if this was your country! said he Or as if ye would be tried here in a country of Stewarts!

It's all Scotland said I

Man I whiles wonder at ye said Alan This is a Campbell that's been killed Well it'll be tried in Inverara the Campbells head place with fifteen Campbells in the jury box and the biggest Campbell of all (and that's the Duke) sitting cocking on the bench Justice David? The same justice by all the world as Glenure found a while ago at the road side

This frightened me a little I confess and would have frightened me more

I had known how nearly exact were Alan's predictions indeed it was but in one point that he exaggerated there being but eleven Campbells on the jury though as the other four were equally in the Duke's dependence it mattered less than might appear Still I cried out that he was unjust to the Duke of Argyle who (for all he was a Whig) was yet a wise and honest nobleman

'Hoot' said Alan the man's a Whig nae doubt but I would never deny he was a good chieftain to his clan And what would the clan think if there was a Campbell shot and naebody hanged and their own chief the Justice General? But have often observed says Alan that you Low country bodies have no clear idea of what's right and wrong

At thi I did at last laugh out aloud when to my surprise Alan joined in and laughed as merrily as myself

'Na na said he we're in the Hielands David and when I tell ye to run take my word and run Nae doubt it's a hard thing to skulk and starve in the heather but it's harder yet to lie shackled in a red coat prison

I asked him whither we should flee and as he told me to the Lowlands I was a little better inclined to go with him for indeed I was growing impatient to get back and have the upper hand of my uncle Besides Alan made so sure here would be no question of justice in the matter that I began to be afraid he might be right Of all deaths I would truly like least to die by the gallows and the picture of that uncanny instrument came into my head with extraordinary clearness (as I had once seen it engraved at the top of a pedlar's ballad) and took away my appetite for courts of justice

'I'll chance it Alan said I I'll go with you

But mind you said Alan it's no small thing Ye maun lie bare and hard and brook many an empty belly Your bed shall be the moorcock's and your life shall be like the hunted deer's and ye shall sleep with your hand upon your weapons Ay man ye shall taigle many a weary foot or we get clear' I tell ye this at the start, for it's a life that I ken well But if ye ask what other chance ye have I answer Nane Either take to the heather with me or else hang

And that's a choice very easily made said I and we shook hands upon it

And now let's take another keek at the red coats ' says Alan and he led me to the north eastern fringe of the wood

Looking out between the trees we could see a great side of mountain running down exceedingly steep into the waters of the loch It was a rough part all hanging stone and heather and bit scraggs of birchwood and away at the far end towards Balachulish little wee red soldiers were dipping up and down over hill and howe and growing smaller every minute There was no cheering now for I think they had other uses for what breath was left them but they still stuck to the trail and doubtless thought that we were close in front of them

Alan watched them smiling to himself

Ay said he they'll be gey weary before they've got to the end of that employ' And so you and me David can sit down and eat a bite and breathe a bit longer and take a dram from my bottle Then we'll strike for Aucharn, the house of my kinsman James of the Glens where I must get my clothes,

and my arms and money to carry us along and then David well cry Forth Fortune' and take a cast among the heather

So we sat again and ate and drank in a place where we could see the sun going down into a field of great wild and houseless mountains such as I was now condemned to waner in with my companion Partly as we so sat and partly afterwards on the way to Aucharn each of us narrated his adventures and I shall here set down so much of Alan's as seems either curious or needful

It appears he ran to the bulwarks as soon as the wave was passed saw me and lost me and saw me again as I tumbled in the roost and at last had one glimpse of me clinging on the yard It was this that put him in some hope I would maybe get to land after all and made him leave those clues and messages which had brought me (for my sins) to that unlucky country of Appin

In the meanwhile those still on the brig had got the skiff launched and one or two were on board of her already when there came a second wave greater than the first and heaved the brig out of her place and would certainly have sent her to the bottom had she not struck and caught on some projection of the reef When she had struck first it had been bows on so that the stern had hitherto been lowest But now her stern was thrown in the air and the bows plunged under the sea and with that the water began to pour into the fore scuttle like the pouring of a mill dam

It took the colour out of Alan's face even to tell what followed For there were still two men lying impotent in their bunks and these seeing the water pour in and thinking the ship had foundered began to cry out aloud and that with such harrowing cries that all who were on deck tumbled one after another into the skiff and fell to their oars They were not two hundred yards away when there came a third great sea and at that the brig lifted clean over the reef her canvas filled for a moment and she seemed to sail in chase of them but settling all the while and presently she drew down and down as if a hand was drawing her and the sea closed over the *Covenant* of Dysart

Never a word they spoke as they pulled ashore being stunned with the horror of that screaming but they had scarce set foot upon the beach when Hoseason woke up as if out of a muse and made them lay hands upon Alan They hung back indeed having little taste for the employment but Hoseason was like a fiend crying that Alan was alone that he had a great sum about him that he had been the means of losing the brig and drowning all their comrades and that here was both revenge and wealth upon a single cast It was seven against one in that part of the shore there was no rock that Alan could set his back to and the sailors began to spread out and come behind him

And then said Alan the little man with the red head—I havenae mind of the name that he is called'

Riach said I

'Ay said Alan Riach' Well it was him that took up the clubs for me asked the men if they werenae feared of a judgment, and says he Dod I'll put my back to the Hielandman's mysel That's none such an entirely bad little man yon little man with the red head said Alan He has some plunks of decency'

"Well ' said I "he was kind to me in his way

' And so he was to Alan said he and by my troth I found his way a very good one! But ye see David the loss of the ship and the cries of these poor lads sat very ill upon the man and I m thinking that would be the cause of it."

Well I would think so says I for he was as keen as any of the rest at the beginning But how did Hoseason take it?

It sticks in my mind that he would take it very ill says Alan But the little man cried to me to run and indeed I thought it was a good observe and ran The last that I saw they were all in a knot upon the beach like folk that were not agreeing very well together

What do you mean by that? said I

Well the fists were going said Alan ' and I saw one man go down like a pair of breekis But I thought it would be better no to wait Ye see there s a strip of Campbells in that end of Mull which is no good company for a gentleman like me If it hadnae been for that I would have waited and looked for ye mysel let alone giving a hand to the little man (It was droll how Alan dwelt on Mr Riach s stature for to say the truth the one was not much smaller than the other) So says he continuing I set my best foot forward and whenever I met in with anyone I cried out there was a wreck ashore Man they didnae stop to fash with me! You should have seen them linking for the beach! And when they got there they found they had the pleasure of a run which is aye good for a Campbell I m thinking it was a judgment on the clan that the brig went down in the lump and didnae break But it was a very unlucky thing for you that same for if any wreck had come ashore they would have hunted high and low and would soon have found ye

XIX

THE HOUSE OF FEAR

NIGHT FELL as we were walking and the clouds which had broken up in the afternoon settled in and thickened so that it fell for the season of the year extremely dark The way we went was over rough mountain sides and though Alan pushed on with an assured manner I could by no means see how he directed himself

At last about half past ten of the clock we came to the top of a brace and saw lights below us It seemed a house door stood open and let out a beam of fire and candle light and all round the house and steading five or six persons were moving hurriedly about each carrying a lighted brand

James must have tint his wits said Alan If this was the soldiers instead of you and me he would be in a bonny mess But I dare say he ll have a sentry on the road, and he would ken well enough no soldier would find the way that we came

Hereupon he whistled three times in a particular manner It was strange to see how at the first sound of it, all the moving torches came to a stand as if

the bearers were affrighted and how at the third the bustle began again as before

Having thus set folks minds at rest we came down the brae and were met at the yard gate (for this place was like a well doing farm) by a tall hand some man of more than fifty who cried out to Alan in the Gaelic

James Stewart said Alan I will ask ye to speak in Scotch for here is a young gentleman with me that has nane of the other This is him he added putting his arm through mine a young gentleman of the Lowlands and a laird in his country too but I am thinking it will be the better for his health if we give his name the go by

James of the Glens turned to me for a moment and greeted me courteously enough the next he had turned to Alan

This has been a dreadful accident he cried It will bring trouble on the country And he wrung his hands

Hoots! said Alan ye must take the sour with the sweet man Colin Roy is dead and be thankful for that!

Ay said James and by my troth I wish he was alive again! It's all very fine to blow and boast beforehand but now it's done Alan and who's to bear the wyte* of it? The accident fell out in Appin—mind ye that Alan it's Appin that must pay and I am a man that has a family

While this was going on I looked about me at the servants Some were on 'adders digging in the thatch of the house or the farm buildings from which they brought out guns swords and different weapons of war others carried them away and by the sound of mattock blows from somewhere further down the brae I suppose they buried them Though they were all so busy there prevailed no kind of order in their efforts men struggled together for the same gun and ran into each other with their burning torches and James was continually turning about from his talk with Alan to cry out orders which were apparently never understood The faces in the torchlight were like those of people overborne with hurry and panic and though none spoke above his breath their speech sounded both anxious and angry

It was about this time that a lassie came out of the house carrying a pack or bundle and it has often made me smile to think how Alan's instinct awoke at the mere sight of it

What's that the lassie has? he asked

We're just setting the house in order Alan, said James in his frightened and somewhat fawning way They'll search Appin with candles and we must have all things straight We're digging the bit guns and swords into the moss ye see and these I am thinking will be your ain French clothes We'll be to bury them I believe

Bury my French clothes! cried Alan Truth no! And he laid hold upon the packet and retired into the barn to shift himself recommending me in the meanwhile to his kinsman

James carried me accordingly into the kitchen, and sat down with me at table smiling and tall ing at first in a very hospitable manner But presently the gloom

*Blame

returned upon him he sat frowning and biting his fingers only remembered me from time to time and then gave me but a word or two and a poor smile and back into his private terrors His wife sat by the fire and wept with her face in her hands his eldest son was crouched upon the floor running over a great mass of papers and now and again setting one alight and burning it to the bitter end all the while a servant lass with a red face was rummaging about the room in a blind hurry and fear and whimpering as she went and every now and again one of the men would thrust in his face from the yard and cry for orders

At last James could keep his seat no longer and begged my permission to be so unmannerly as to walk about I am but poor company altogether sir says he but I can't think of nothing but this dreadful accident and the trouble it is like to bring upon quite innocent persons

A little after he observed his son burning a paper which he thought should have been kept, and at that his excitement burst out so that it was painful to witness He struck the lad repeatedly

Are you gone gyte*? he cried Do you wish to hang your father and forgetful of my presence carried on at him a long time together in the Gaelic the young man answering nothing only the wife at the name of hanging throwing her apron over her face and sobbing louder than before

This was all wretched for a stranger like myself to hear and see, and I was right glad when Alan returned looking like himself in his fine French clothes though (to be sure) they were now grown almost too battered and withered to deserve the name of fine I was then taken out in my turn by another of the sons and given that change of clothing of which I had stood so long in need and a pair of Highland brogues made of deer leather rather strange at first but after a little practice very easy to the feet

By the time I came back Alan must have told his story for it seemed understood that I was to fly with him and they were all busy upon our equipment They gave us each a sword and pistols though I professed my inability to use the former and with these and some ammunition a bag of oatmeal and iron pan and a bottle of right French brandy we were ready for the heather Money indeed was lacking I had about two guineas left Alan's belt having been despatched by another hand that trusty messenger had no more than seventeen pence to his whole fortune and as for James it appears he had brought himself so low with journeys to Edinburgh and legal expenses on behalf of the tenants that he could only scrape together three and fivepence half-penny the most of it in coppers

This'll no do said Alan

Ye must find a safe bit somewhere near by said James and get word sent to me Ye see ye'll have to get this business prettily off Alan This is no time to be stayed for a guinea or two They're sure to get wind of ye sure to seek ye and by my way of it sure to lay on ye the wyte of this day's accident If it falls on you it falls on me that am your near kinsman and harboured ye while ye were in the country And if it comes on me— he paused and bit

*Mad

his fingers with a white face It would be a painful thing for our friends if I was to hang said he

It would be an ill day for Appin says Alan

It's a day that sticks in my throat said James O man man man—man Alan you and me have spoken like two fools' he cried striking his hand upon the wall so that the house rang again

Well and that's true too said Alan and my friend from the Lowlands here (nodding at me) gave me a good word upon that head, if I would only have listened to him

But see here said James returning to his former manner if they lay me by the heels Alan, it's then that you'll be needing the money For with all that I have said and that you have said it will look very black against the two of us do ye mark that? Well follow me out and ye'll see that I'll have to get a paper out against ye mysel, I'll have to offer a reward for ye ay will I! It's a ore thing to do between such near friends but if I get the dirdum* of this dreadful accident I'll have to fend for myself man Do ye see that?

He spoke with a pleading earnestness taking Alan by the breast of the coat Ay said Alan I see that

And ye'll have to be clear of the country, Alan—ay and clear of Scotland— you and your friend from the Lowlands too For I'll have to paper your friend from the Lowlands Ye see that Alan—say that you see that!

I thought Alan flushed a bit This is unco hard on me that brought him here James said he throwing his head back It's like making me a traitor!

Now Alan man! cried James Look things in the face! He'll be prepared anyway Mungo Campbell'll be sure to paper him what matters if I paper him too? And then, Alan I am a man that has a family And then after a little pause on both sides And Alan it'll be a jury of Campbells said he

There's one thing said Alan musingly that naebody lens his name

Nor yet they shallnae Alan! There's my hand on that cried James for all the world as if he had really known my name and was foregoing some advantage But just the habit he was in and what he looked like, and his age and the like? I couldnae well do less

I wonder at your father's son, cried Alan sternly Would ye sell the lad with a gift? Would ye change his clothes and then betray him?

No no Alan said James No no the habit he took off—the habit Mungo saw him in But I thought he seemed crestfallen indeed he was clutching at every straw and all the time I daresay saw the faces of his hereditary foes on the bench and in the jury box and the gallows as the background

Well sir says Alan, turning to me what say ye to that? Ye are here under the safeguard of my honour, and it's my part to see nothing done but what shall please you

I have but one word to say said I for to all this dispute I am a perfect stranger But the plain common sense is to set the blame where it belongs and that is on the man that fired the shot Paper him as ye call it set the hunt on him and let honest, innocent folk show their faces in safety

*Blame

But at this both Alan and James cried out in horror bidding me hold my tongue for that was not to be thought of and asking me what the Camerons would think? (which confirmed me it must have been a Cameron from Ma-more that did the act) and if I did not see that the lad might be caught Ye havenae surely thought of that? they said with such innocent earnestness that my hands dropped at my side and I despaired of argument

Very well then said I paper me if you please paper Alan paper King George! We're all three innocent and that seems to be what's wanted But at least sir said I to James recovering from my little fit of annoyance I am Alan's friend and if I can be helpful to friends of his I will not stumble at the risk

I thought it best to put a fair face on my consent for I saw Alan troubled and besides (thinks I to myself) as soon as my back is turned they will paper me as they call it whether I consent or not But in this I saw I was wrong for I had no sooner said the words than Mrs Stewart leaped out of her chair came running over to us and wept first upon my neck and then on Alan's blessing God for our goodness to her family

As for you Alan it was no more than your bounden duty she said But for this lad that has come here and seen us at our worst and seen the goodman fleecing like a suitor him that by rights should give his commands like any king—as for you my lad she says my heart is wae not to have your name but I have your face and as long as my heart beats under my bosom I will keep it and think of it and bless it And with that she kissed me and burst once more into such sobbing that I stood abashed

Hoot hoot said Alan looking mighty silly The day comes unco soon in this month of July and tomorrow there'll be a fine to do in Appin a fine riding of dragoons and crying of Cruachan! * and running of red coats and it behooves you and me to be the sooner gone

Thereupon we said farewell and set out again, bending somewhat eastwards in a fine mild dark night and over much the same broken country as before

XX

THE FLIGHT IN THE HEATHER THE ROCKS

SOMETIMES WE WALKED sometimes ran and as it drew on to morning walked ever the less and ran the more Though upon its face that country appeared to be a desert yet there were huts and houses of the people of which we must have passed more than twenty hidden in quiet places of the hills When we came to one of these Alan would leave me in the way and go himself and rap upon the side of the house and speak a while at the window with some sleeper awakened This was to pass the news which in that country was so much of a duty that Alan must pause to attend to it even while fleeing for his life and so well attended to by others that in more than half of the houses where

*The rallying word of the Campbells

we called they had heard already of the murder In the others as well as I could make out (standing back at a distance and hearing a strange tongue) the news was received with more of consternation than surprise

For all our hurry day began to come in while we were still far from any shelter It found us in a prodigious valley strewn with rocks and where ran a foaming river Wild mountains stood around it there grew there neither grass nor trees and I have sometimes thought since then that it may have been the valley called Glencoe where the massacre was in the time of King William But for the details of our itinerary I am all to seek our way lying now by short cuts now by great detours our pace being so hurried our time of journeying usually by night and the names of such places as I asked and heard being in the Gaelic tongue and the more easily forgotten

The first peep of morning then showed us this horrible place and I could see Alan knit his brow

This is no fit place for you and me he said This is a place they're bound to watch

And with that he ran harder than ever down to the water side in a part where the river was split in two among three rocks It went through with a horrid thundering that made my belly quake and there hung over the lynn a little mist of spray Alan looked neither to the right nor to the left but jumped clean upon the middle rock and fell there on his hands and knees to check himself for that rock was small and he might have pitched over on the far side I had scarce time to measure the distance or to understand the peril before I had followed him and he had caught and stopped me

So there we stood side by side upon a small rock slippery with spray a far broader leap in front of us and the river dashing upon all sides When I saw where I was there came on me a deadly sickness of fear and I put my hand over my eyes Alan took me and shook me I saw he was speaking but the roaring of the falls and the trouble of my mind prevented me from hearing only I saw his face was red with anger and that he stamped upon the rock The same look showed me the water raging by and the mist hanging in the air and with that I covered my eyes again and shuddered

The next minute Alan had set the brandy bottle to my lips and forced me to drink about a gill which sent the blood into my head again Then putting his hands to his mouth and his mouth to my ear he shouted Hang or drown' and turning his back upon me leaped over the farther branch of the stream and landed safe I was now alone upon the rock which gave me the more room the brandy was singing in my ears I had this good example fresh before me and just wit enough to see that if I did not leap at once I should never leap at all I bent low on my knees and flung myself forth with that kind of anger of despair that has sometimes stood me in stead of courage Sure enough it was but my hands that reached the full length these slipped caught again slipped again and I was slithering back into the lynn when Alan seized me first by the hair then by the collar and with a great strain dragged me into safety

Never a word he said but set off running again for his life and I must stag

ger to my feet and run after 'im I had been weary before but now I was sick and bruised and partly drunken with the brandy I kept stumbling as I ran I had a stitch that came near to overmaster me and then at last Alan paused under a great rock that stood there among a number of others it was none ~~too~~ soon for David Balfour

A great rock I have said but by rights it was two rocks leaning together at the top both some twenty feet high and at the first sight inaccessible Even Alan (though you may say he had as good as four hands) failed twice in an attempt to climb them and it was only at the third trial and then by standing on my shoulders and leaping up with such force as I thought must have broken my collar bone that he secured a lodgment Once there he let down his leathern girdle and with the aid of that and a pair of shallow footholds in the rock I scrambled up beside him

Then I saw why we had come there for the two rocks being both somewhat hollow on the top and sloping one to the other made a kind of dish or saucer where as many as three or four men might have lain hidden.

All this while Alan had not said a word and had run and climbed with such a savage silent frenzy of hurry that I knew that he was in mortal fear of some miscarriage Even now we were on the rock he said nothing nor so much as relaxed the frowning look upon his face but clapped flat down and keeping only one eye above the edge of our place of shelter scouted all round the compass The dawn had come quite clear we could see the stony sides of the valley and its bottom which was bestrewed with rocks and the river which went from one side to another and made white falls but nowhere the smoke of a house nor any living creature but some eagles screaming round a cliff

Then at last Alan smiled

'Ay said he now we have a chance' and then looking at me with some amusement 'ye're no very gleg*' at the jumping said he

At this I suppose I coloured with mortification, for he added at once 'Hoots' mall blame to ye' To be feared of a thing and yet to do it is what makes the prettiest kind of a man And then there was water there and water's a thing that daunts even me No no said Alan it's no you that's to blame it's me

I asked him why

Why said he I have proved myself a gomeral this night For first of all I take a wrong road and that in my own country of Appin so that the day has caught us where we should never have been and thanks to that we lie here in some danger and mair discomfort And next (which is the worst of the two for a man that has been so much among the heather as myself) I have come wanting a water bottle and here we lie for a long summer's day with naething but neat spirit Ye may think that a small matter but before it comes night David ye'll give me news of it

I was anxious to redeem my character and offered if he would pour out the brandy to run down and fill the bottle at the river

I wouldnae waste the good spirit either says he "It's been a good friend

*Brisk

to you this night or in my poor opinion ye would still be cocking on yon stone And what's mair says he ye may have observed (you that's a man of so much penetration) that Alan Breck Stewart was perhaps walking quicker than his ordinary

You! I cried you were running fit to burst

Was I so? said he 'Well then ye may depend upon it there was nae time to be lost And now here is enough said gang you to your sleep lad and I'll watch

Accordingly I lay down to sleep a little peaty earth had drifted in between the top of the two rocks and some bracken grew there to be a bed to me the last thing I heard was still the crying of the eagles

I daresay it would be nine in the morning when I was roughly awakened, and found Alan's hand pressed upon my mouth

Weesht! he whispered Ye were snoring

Well said I surprised at his anxious and dark face and why not?

He peered over the edge of the rock and signed to me to do the like

It was now high day cloudless and very hot The valley was as clear as in a picture About half a mile up the water was a camp of red-coats a big fire blazed in their midst, at which some were cooking and near by on the top of a rock about as high as ours there stood a sentry with the sun sparkling on his arms All the way down along the riverside were posted other sentries here near together there widelier scattered, some planted like the first on places of command some on the ground level and marching and counter marching so as to meet halfway Higher up the glen where the ground was more open, the chain of posts was continued by horse soldiers whom we could see in the distance riding to and fro Lower down, the infantry continued but as the stream suddenly swelled by the confluence of a considerable burn they were more widely set, and only watched the fords and stepping stones

I took but one look at them and ducked again into my place It was strange indeed to see this valley which had lain so solitary in the hour of dawn bristling with arms and dotted with the red coats and breeches

"Ye see said Alan, this was what I was afraid of Davie that they would watch the burn side They began to come in about two hours ago and man! but ye're a grand hand at the sleeping! We're in a narrow place If they get up the sides of the hill they could easy spy us with a glass but if they'll only keep in the foot of the valley we'll do yet The posts are thinner down the water and come night we'll try our hand at getting by them.'

And what are we to do till night? I asked

Lie here says he and burstle

That one good Scotch word burstle was indeed the most of the story of the day that we had now to pass You are to remember that we lay on the bare top of a rock like scones upon a girdle the sun beat upon us cruelly the rock grew so heated a man could scarce endure the touch of it and the little patch of earth and fern, which kept cooler was only large enough for one at a time We took turn about to lie on the naked rock which was indeed like the position of that saint that was martyred on a gridiron and it ran in my mind

how strange it was that in the same climate and at only a few days' distance I should have suffered so cruelly first from cold upon my island and now from heat upon this rock

All the while we had no water only raw brandy for a drink which was worse than nothing but we kept the bottle as cool as we could, burying it in the earth and got some relief by bathing our breasts and temples

The soldiers kept stirring all day in the bottom of the valley now changing guard now in patrolling parties hunting among the rocks These lay round in so great a number that to look for men among them was like looking for a needle in a bottle of hay and being so hopeless a task it was gone about with less care Yet we could see the soldiers pierce their bayonets among the heather which sent a cold thrill through my vitals and they would sometimes hang about our rock so that we scarce dared to breathe

It was in this way that I first heard the right English speech one fellow as he went by actually clapping his hand upon the sunny face of the rock on which we lay and plucking it off again with an oath I tell you it's or says he and I was amazed at the clipping tones and the odd sing-song in which he spoke and no less at that strange trick of dropping out the letter h To be sure I had heard Ransome but he had taken his ways from all sorts of people and spoke so imperfectly at the best that I set down the most of it to childishness My surprise was all the greater to hear that manner of speaking in the mouth of a grown man and indeed I have never grown used to it nor yet altogether with the English grammar as perhaps a very critical eye might here and there spy out even in these memoirs

The tediousness and pain of these hours upon the rock grew only the greater as the day went on the rock getting still the hotter and the sun fiercer There were giddiness and sickness and sharp pangs like rheumatism to be supported I minded then and have often minded since on the lines in our Scotch psalm —

*“The moon by night thee shall not smite,
Nor yet the sun by day, ”*

and indeed it was only by God's blessing that we neither of us were sun smitten

At last about two it was beyond men's bearing and there as now temptation to resist as well as pain to thole For the sun having now got a little into the west there came a patch of shade on the east side of our rock which was the side sheltered from the soldiers

As well one death as another said Alan and slipped over the edge and dropped on the ground on the shadowy side

I followed him at once and instantly fell all my length so weak was I and so giddy with that long exposure Here then we lay for an hour or two aching from head to foot as weak as water and lying quite naked to the eye of any soldier who should have strolled that way None came however all passing by on the other side so that our rock continued to be our shield even in this new position

Presently we began again to get a little strength and as the soldiers were now lying closer along the riverside Alan proposed that we should try a start.

I was by this time afraid of but one thing in the world and that was to be set back upon the rock anything else was welcome to me so we got ourselves at once in marching order and began to slip from rock to rock one after the other now crawling flat on our bellies in the shade now making a run for it heart in mouth

The soldiers having searched this side of the valley after a fashion and being perhaps somewhat sleepy with the sultriness of the afternoon had now laid by much of the vigilance and stood dozing at their posts or only kept a look out along the banks of the river so that in this way keeping down the valley and at the same time towards the mountains we drew steadily away from their neighbourhood But the business was the most wearing I had ever taken part in A man had need of a hundred eyes in every part of him to keep concealed in that uneven country and within cry of so many and scattered sentries When we must pass an open place quickness was not all but a swift judgment not only of the lie of the whole country but of the solidity of every stone on which we must set foot for the afternoon was now fallen so breathless that the rolling of a pebble sounded abroad like a pistol shot and would start the echo calling among the hills and cliffs

By sundown we had made some distance even by our slow rate of progress though to be sure the sentry on the rock was still plainly in our view But now we came on something that put all fears out of season and that was a deep rushing burn, that tore down in that part to join the glen river At the sight of this we cast ourselves on the ground and plunged head and shoulders in the water and I cannot tell which was the more pleasant the great shock as the cool stream went over us or the greed with which we drank of it

We lay there (for the banks hid us) drank again and again bathed our chests let our wrists trail in the running water till they ached with the chill and at last, being wonderfully renewed we got out the meal bag and made drammach in the iron pan This though it is but cold water mingled with oat meal yet makes a good enough dish for a hungry man and where there are no means of making fire or (as in our case) good reasons for not making one it is the chief stand by of those who have taken to the heather

As soon as the shadow of the night had fallen we set forth again at first with the same caution but presently with more boldness standing our full height and stepping out at a good pace of walking The way was very intricate lying up the steep sides of mountains and along the brows of cliffs clouds had come in with the sunset, and the night was dark and cool so that I walked without much fatigue but in continual fear of falling and rolling down the mountains and with no guess at our direction

The moon rose at last and found us still on the road it was in its last quarter and was long beset with clouds but after a while shone out and showed me many dark heads of mountains and was reflected far underneath us on the narrow arm of a sea loch

At this sight we both paused I struck with wonder to find myself so high and walking (as it seemed to me) upon clouds Alan to make sure of his direction

Seemingly he was well pleased, and he must certainly have judged us out of

ear shot of all our enemies for throughout the rest of our night march he beguiled the way with whistling of many tunes warlike merry plaintive reel tunes that made the foot go faster, tunes of my own south country that made me fain to be home from my adventures and all these on the great, dark desert mountains, making company upon the way

XXI

THE FLIGHT IN THE HEATHER THE HEUGH OF CORRYNAKIEGH

EARLY AS DAY COMES in the beginning of July it was still dark when we reached our destination a cleft in the head of a great mountain with a water running through the midst and upon the one hand a shallow cave in a rock Birches grew there in a thin pretty wood which a little further on was changed into a wood of pines The burn was full of trout the wood of cushat-doves on the open side of the mountain beyond whaups would be always whistling and cuckoos were plentiful From the mouth of the cleft we looked down upon a part of Mamore and on the sea-loch that divides that country from Appin and this from so great a height as made it my continual wonder and pleasure to sit and behold them

The name of the cleft was the Heugh of Corrynakiegh and although from its height being so near upon the sea it was often beset with clouds yet it was on the whole a pleasant place and the five days we lived in it went happily

We slept in the cave making our bed of heather bushes which we cut for that purpose and covering ourselves with Alan's great coat There was a low concealed place in a turning of the glen where we were so bold as to make fire so that we could warm ourselves when the clouds set in and cook hot porridge and grill the little trouts that we caught with our hands under the stones and over hanging banks of the burn This was indeed our chief pleasure and business and not only to save our meal against worse times but with a rivalry that much amused us we spent a great part of our days at the water side stripped to the waist and groping about or (as they say) guddling for these fish The largest we got might have been a quarter of a pound but they were of good flesh and flavour and when broiled upon the coals lacked only a little salt to be delicious

In any by time Alan must teach me to use my sword for my ignorance had much distressed him and I think besides as I had sometimes the upper hand of him in the fishing he was not sorry to turn to an exercise where he had so much the upper hand of me He made it somewhat more of a pain than need have been for he stormed at me all through the lessons in a very violent manner of scolding and would push me so close that I made sure he must run me through the body I was often tempted to turn tail but held my ground for all that, and got some profit of my lessons if it was but to stand on guard with an assured countenance which is often all that is required So though I could never in the least please my master I was not altogether displeased with myself

In the meanwhile you are not to suppose that we neglected our chief business which was to get away

It will be many a long day Alan said to me on our first morning before the red-coats think upon seeking Corrynakiegh so now we must get word sent to James and he must find the siller for us

And how shall we send that word? says I We are here in a desert place which yet we dare not leave and unless ye get the fowls of the air to be your messengers I see not what we shall be able to do

Ay said Alan Ye're a man of small contrivance David

Thereupon he fell in a muse looking in the embers of the fire and presently, getting a piece of wood he fashioned it in a cross the four ends of which he blackened on the coals Then he looked at me a little shyly

Could ye lend me my button? says he It seems a strange thing to ask a gift again but I own I am laith to cut another

I gave him the button, whereupon he strung it on the strip of his great coat which he had used to bind the cross and tying in a little sprig of birch and another of fir he looked upon his work with satisfaction

Now said he there is a little clachan (what is called a hamlet in the English) 'not very far from Corrynakiegh and it has the name of Koalishacoan. There there are living many friends of mine whom I could trust with my life and some that I am no just so sure of Ye see David there will be money set upon our heads James himself is to set money on them and as for the Camp bells they would never spare siller where there was a Stewart to be hurt If it was otherwise I would go down to Koalishacoan whatever and trust my life into these people's hands as lightly as I would trust another with my glove

But being so? said I

Being so said he I would as lief they didnae see me There's bad folk everywhere and what's far worse weak ones So when it comes dark again I will steal down into that clachan, and set this that I have been making in the window of a good friend of mine John Breck MacColl a bouman* of Appin's

With all my heart says I and if he finds it what is he to think?

Well says Alan, I wish he was a man of more penetration for by my troth I am afraid he will make little enough of it! But this is what I have in my mind This cross is something in the nature of the crosstarrie or fiery cross which is the signal of gathering in our clans yet he will know well enough the clan is not to rise for there it is standing in his window and no word with it So he will say to himself *The clan is not to rise, but there is something* Then he will see my button and that was Duncan Stewart's And then he will say to himself *The son of Duncan is in the heather, and has need of me*,

Well" said I it may be But even supposing so, there is a good deal of heather between here and the Forth

And that is a very true word says Alan But then John Breck will see the sprig of birch and the sprig of pine, and he will say to himself (if he is a

*A bouman is a tenant who takes stock from the landlord and shares with him the increase

man of any penetration at all which I misdoubt) *Alan will be lying in a wood which is both of pines and birches* Then he will think to himself *Tl at is not so very rife hereabout*, and then he will come and give us a look up in Corry-nakiegh And if he does not David the devil may fly away with him for what I care for he will no be worth the salt to his porridge

Eh man said I drolling with him a little you're very ingenious! But could it not be simpler for you to write him a few words in black and white?

And that is an excellent observe Mr Balfour of Shaws says Alan drolling with me and it would certainly be much simpler for me to write to him but it would be a sore job for John Breck to read it He would have to go to the school for two three years and it's possible we might be wearied waiting on him

So that night Alan carried down his fiery cross and set it in the bournan's window He was troubled when he came back for the dogs had barked and the folk run out from their houses and he thought he had heard a clatter of arms and seen a red coat come to one of the doors On all accounts we lay the next day in the borders of the wood and kept a close lookout so that if it was John Breck that came we might be ready to guide him and if it was the red coats we should have time to get away

About noon a man was to be spied straggling up the open side of the mountain in the sun and looking round him as he came from under his hand No sooner had Alan seen him than he whistled the man turned and came a little towards us then Alan would give another peep! and the man would come still nearer and so by the sound of whistling he was guided to the spot where we lay

He was a ragged wild bearded man about forty grossly disfigured with the smallpox and looked both dull and savage Although his English was very bad and broken yet Alan (according to his very handsome use whenever I was by) would suffer him to speak no Gaelic Perhaps the strange language made him appear more backward than he really was but I thought he had little good will to serve us and what he had was the child of terror

Alan would have had him carry a message to James but the bournan would hear of no message She was forget it he said in his screaming voice and would either have a letter or wash his hands of us

I thought Alan would be gravelled at that for we lacked the means of writing in that desert But he was a man of more resources than I knew searched the wood until he found a quill of a cussat dove which he shaped into a pen made himself a kind of ink with gunpowder from his horn and water from the running stream and tearing a corner from his French military commission (which he carried in his pocket like a talisman to keep him from the gallows) he sat down and wrote as follows

DEAR KINSMAN—Please send the money by the bearer to the place he
kens of

'Your affectionate cousin,
A S

This he entrusted to the bouman who promised to make what manner of speed he best could and carried it off with him down the hill

He was three full days gone but about five in the evening of the third we heard a whistling in the wood which Alan answered and presently the bouman came up the water side looking for us right and left He seemed less sulky than before and indeed he was no doubt well pleased to have got to the end of such a dangerous commision

He gave us the news of the country that it was alive with red coats that arms were being found and poor folk brought in trouble daily and that James and some of his servants were already clapped in prison at Fort William under strong suspicion of complicity It seemed it was noised on all sides that Alan Beck had fired the shot and there was a bill issued for both him and me with one hundred pounds reward

This was all as bad as could be and the little note the bouman had carried us from Mrs Stewart was or a miserable sadness In it she besought Alan not to let himself be captured assuring him if he fell in the hands of the troops, both he and James were no better than dead men The money she sent was all that she could beg or borrow and she prayed heaven we could be doing with it Lastly she said she enclosed us one of the bills in which we were described

This we looked upon with great curiosity and not a little fear partly as a man may look in a mirror partly as he might look into the barrel of an enemy's gun to judge if it be truly aimed Alan was advertised as a small pock marked, active man of thirty five or thereby dressed in a feathered hat a French side coat of blue with silver buttons and lace a great deal tarnished a red waistcoat and breeches of black shag and I as a tall strong lad of about eighteen wearing an old blue coat very ragged an old Highland bonnet a long home spun waistcoat blue breeches his legs bare low country shoes wanting the toes speaks like a lowlander and has no beard

Alan was well enough pleased to see his finery so fully remembered and set down only when he came to the word tarnish he looked upon his lace like one a little mortified As for myself I thought I cut a miserable figure in the bill and yet was well enough pleased too for since I had changed these rags the description had ceased to be a danger and become a source of safety

Alan said I you should change your clothes

Na troth' said Alan I have nae others A fine sight I would be if I went back to France in a bonnet'

This put a second reflection in my mind that if I were to separate from Alan and his tell tale clothes I should be safe against arrest and might go openly about my business Nor was this all for suppose I was arrested when I was alone there was little against me but suppose I was taken in company with the reputed murderer my case would begin to be grave For generosity's sake I dare not speak my mind upon this head but I thought of it none the less

I thought of it all the more too when the bouman brought out a green purse with four guineas in gold and the best part of another in small change True it was more than I had But then Alan with less than five guineas had

to get as far as France I with my less than two not beyond Queen's Ferry so that taking things in their proportion Alan's society was not only a peril to my life but a burden on my purse

But there was no thought of the sort in the honest head of my companion He believed he was serving helping and protecting me And what could I do but hold my peace and chafe and take my chance of it?

It's little enough said Alan putting the purse in his pocket but it'll do my business And now John Breck if ye will hand me over my button this gentleman and me will be for taking the road

But the bouman after feeling about in a hairy purse that hung in front of him in the Highland manner (though he wore otherwise the low land habit, with sea trousers) began to roll his eyes strangely and at last said Her nansel will loss it meaning he thought he had lost it

What! cried Alan you will lose my button, that was my father's before me? Now I will tell you what is in my mind John Breck it is in my mind this is the worse day's work that ever ye did since ye were born

And as Alan spoke he set his hands on his knees and looked at the bouman with a smiling mouth and that darcing light in his eyes which meant mischief to his enemies

Perhaps the bouman was honest enough perhaps he had meant to cheat and then finding himself alone with two of us in a desert place cast back to honesty as being safer at least and all at once he seemed to find that button and handed it to Alan

Well and it is a good thing for the honour of the Macolls said Alan and then to me Here is my button back again and I thank you for parting with it, which is of a piece with all your friendships to me Then he took the warmest parting of the bouman For says he ye have done very well by me and set your neck at a venture and I will always give you the name of a good man

Lastly the bouman took himself off by one way and Alan and I (getting out chattels together) struck into another to resume our flight

XXII

THE FLIGHT IN THE HEATHER THE MOOR

MORE THAN ELEVEN HOURS of incessant hard travelling brought us early in the morning to the end of a range of mountains In front of us there lay a piece of low broken desert land which we must now cross The sun was not long up and shone straight in our eyes a little thin mist went up from the face of the moorland like a smoke so that (as Alan said) there might have been twenty squadron of dragoons there and we none the wiser

We sat down therefore in a howe of the hillside till the mist should have risen and made ourselves a dish of drammach and held a council of war

David said Alan this is the kittle bit Shall we lie here till it comes night, or shall we risk it and stave on ahead?

Well said I I am tired indeed but I could walk as far again if that v as all

Av but it isnae said Alan nor yet the half This is how we stand Appin's fair death to us To the south it's all Campbells and no to be thought of To the north well there's no muckle to be gained by going north neither for you that wants to get to Queen's Ferry nor yet for me that wants to get to France Well then we'll can strike east

East be it! says I quite cheerily but I was thinking in to myself O man, if you would only take one point of the compass and let me take any other it would be the best for both of us

Well then east ye see we have the muirs said Alan Once there David it's mere pitch and toss Out on yon bold naked flat place where can a body turn to? Let the red coats come over a hill they can spy you miles away and the sorrow's in their horses heels they would soon ride you down It's no good place David and I'm free to say it's worse by daylight than by dark

Alan said I hear my way of it Appin's death for us we have none too much money nor yet meal the longer they seek the nearer they may guess where we are it's all a risk and I give my word to go ahead until we drop

Alan was delighted There are whiles said he when ye are altogether too canny and Whiggish to be company for a gentleman like me but there come other whiles when ye show yourself a mettle spark and it's then, David that I love ye like a brother

The mist rose and died away and showed us that country lying as waste as the sea only the moor fowl and the peewees crying upon it and far over to the east a herd of deer moving like dots Much of it was red with heather much of the rest broken up with bogs and hags and peaty pools some had been burnt black in a heath fire and in another place there are quite a forest of dead firs standing like skeletons A wearier looking desert man never saw but at least it was clear of troops which was our point

We went down accordingly into the waste and began to make our toilsome and devious travels towards the eastern verge There were the tops of mountains all round (you are to remember) from whence we might be spied at any moment so it behoved us to keep in the hollow parts of the moor and when these turned aside from our direction to move upon its naked face with infinite care Sometimes for half an hour together we must crawl from one heather bush to another as hunters do when they are hard upon the deer It was a clear day again, with a blazing sun the water in the brandy bottle was soon gone and altogether if I had guessed what it would be to crawl half the time upon my belly and to walk much of the rest stooping nearly to the knees I should certainly have held back such a killing enterprise

Toiling and resting and toiling again we wore away the morning and about noon lay down in a thick bush of heather to sleep Alan took the first watch and it seemed to me I had scarce closed my eyes before I was shaken up to take the second We had no clock to go by and Alan stuck a sprig of heath

in the ground to serve instead so that as soon as the shadow of the bush should fall so far to the east I might know to rouse him But I was by this time so weary that I could have slept twelve hours at a stretch I had the taste of sleep in my throat my joints slept even when my mind was waking the hot sme¹ of heather and the drone of the wild bees were like possets to me and every now and again I would give a jump and find I had been dozing

The last time I woke I seemed to come back from farther away and thought the sun had taken a great start in the heavens I looked at the sprig of heath and at that I could have cried aloud for I saw I had betrayed my trust My head was nearly turned with fear and shame and at what I saw when I looked out around me on the moor my heart was like dying in my body For sure enough a body of horse soldiers had come during my sleep and were drawing near to us from the south east spread out in the shape of a fan and riding their horses to and fro in the deep parts of the heather

When I waked Alan he glanced first at the soldiers then at the mark and the position of the sun and knitted his brows with a sudden quick look both ugly and anxious which was all the reproach I had of him

What are we to do now? I asked

Well have to play at being hares said he Do ye see yon mountain² pointing to one on the northeastern sky

Ay said I

Well then says he let us strike for that Its name is Ben Alder it is a wild desert mountain full of hills and hollows and if we can win to it before the morn we may do yet

But Alan cried I that will take us across the very coming of the soldiers'

I ken that fine said he but if we are driven back on Appin we are two dead men So now David man be brisk!

With that he began to run forward on his hands and knees with an incredible quickness as though it were his natural way of going All the time too he kept winding in and out in the lower parts of the moorland where we were the best concealed Some of these had been burned or at least scathed with fire and there rose in our faces (which were close to the ground) a blinding choking dust as fine as smoke The water was long out and this posture of running on the hands and knees brings an overmastering weakness and weariness so that the joints ache and the wrists faint under your weight

Now and then indeed where was a big bush of heather we lay awhile and panted and putting aside the leaves looked back at the dragoons They had not spied us for they held straight on, a half troop I think covering about two miles of ground and beating it mighty thoroughly as they went I had awakened just in time, a little later and we must had fled in front of them instead of escaping on one side Even as it was the least misfortune might betray us and now and again, when a grouse rose out of the heather with a clap of wings we lay as still as the dead and were afraid to breathe

The aching and faintness of my body the labouring of my heart the soreness of my hands and the smarting of my throat and eyes in the continual smoke

of dust and ashes had soon grown to be so unbearable that I would gladly have given up ~~no~~th^rg but the fear of Alan lent me enough of a false kind of courage to continue As for himself (and you are to bear in mind that he was cumbered with a great coat) he had first turned crimson but as time went on the redness began to be mingled with patches of white his breath cried and whistled as it came and his voice when he whispered his observations in my ear during our halts sounded like nothing human Yet he seemed in no way dashed in spirits, nor did he at all abate in his activity so that I was driven to marvel at the man's endurance

At length in the first gloaming of the night we heard a trumpet sound and looking back from among the heather saw the troop beginning to collect A little after they had built a fire and camped for the night about the middle of the waste

At this I begged and besought that we might lie down and sleep

There shall be no sleep the night' said Alan From now on these weary dragoons of yours will keep the crown of the murland and none will get out of Appin but winged fowls We got through in the nick of time and shall we jeopard what we've gained? Na na when the day comes it shall find you and me in a fast place on Ben Alder

Alan I said it's not the want of will it's the strength that I want If I could I would but as sure as I'm alive I cannot

Very well, then said Alan I'll carry ye

I looked to see if he were jesting but no the little man was in dead earnest and the sight of so much resolution shamed me

Lead aw ay' said I I'll follow

He gave me one look as much as to say Well done David! and off he set again at his top speed

It grew cooler and even a little darker (but not much) with the coming of the night The sky was cloudless it was still early in July and pretty far north in the darkest part of that night you would have needed pretty good eyes to read but for all that, I have often seen it darker in a winter midday Heavy dew fell and drenched the moor like rain and this refreshed me for awhile When we stopped to breathe and I had time to see all about me the clearness and sweetness of the night, the shapes of the hills like things asleep and the fire dwindling away behind us like a bright spot in the midst of the moor anger would come upon me in a clap that I must still drag myself in agony and eat the dust like a worm

By what I have read in books I think few that have held a pen were ever really wearied or they would write of it more strongly I had no care of my life neither past nor future, and I scarce remembered there was such a lad as David Balfour I did not think of myself but just of each fresh step which I was sure would be my last, with despair—and of Alan who was the cause of it, with hatred Alan was in the right trade as a soldier this is the officer's part to make men continue to do things they know not wherefore and when if the choice was offered they would lie down where they were and be killed And I dare say I would have made a good enough private, for in these last hours, it

never occurred to me that I had any choice but just to obey as long as I was able and die obeying

Day began to come in after years I thought and by that time we were past the greatest danger and could walk upon our feet like men instead of crawling like brutes But dear heart have mercy what a pair we must have made going double like old grandfathers stumbling like babes and as white as dead folk Never a word passed between us each set his mouth and kept his eyes in front of him and lifted up his foot and set it down again like people lifting weights at a country play* all the while with the moorfowl crying 'peep' in the heather and the light coming slowly clearer in the east

I say Alan did as I did Not that ever I looked at him for I had enough ado to keep my feet, but because it is plain he must have been as stupid with weariness as myself and looked as little where we were going or we should not have walked into an ambush like blind men

It fell in this way We were going down a heathery brae Alan leading and I following a pace or two behind like a fiddler and his wife when upon a sudden the heather gave a rustle three or four ragged men leaped out and the next moment we were lying on our backs each with a dirk at his throat

I don't think I cared the pain of this rough handling was quite swallowed up by the pains of which I was already full and I was too glad to have stopped walking to mind about a dirk I lay looking up in the face of the man that held me and I mind his face was black with the sun and his eyes very light but I was not afraid of him I heard Alan and another whispering in the Gaelic and what they said was all one to me

Then the dirks were put up our weapons were taken away and we were set face to face sitting in the heather

They are Cluny's men said Alan We couldnae have fallen better We're just to bide here with these which are his out sentries till they can get word to the chief of my arrival

Now Cluny Macpherson the chief of the clan Vourich had been one of the leaders of the great rebellion six years before there was a price on his life and I had supposed him long ago in France with the rest of the heads of that desperate party Even tired as I was the surprise of what I heard half wakened me

What I cried is Cluny still here?

Ay is he so' said Alan Still in his own country and kept by his own clan King George can do no more

I think I would have asked farther but Alan gave me the put off I am rather wearied he said and I would like fine to get a sleep And without more words he rolled on his face in a deep heather bush and seemed to sleep at once

There was no such thing possible for me You have heard grasshoppers whirring in the grass in the summer time? Well I had no sooner closed my eyes than my body and above all my head belly and wrists seemed to

*Village fair

be filled with whirring grasshoppers and I must open my eyes again at once and tumble and toss and sit up and lie down and look at the sky which dazzled me or at Cluny's wild and dirty sentries peering out over the top of the brae and chattering to each other in the Gaelic

That was all the rest I had until the messenger returned when as it appeared that Cluny would be glad to receive us we must get once more upon our feet and set forward Alan was in excellent good spirits much refreshed by his sleep very hungry and looking pleasantly forward to a dram and a dish of hot collops of which it seems the messenger had brought him word For my part it made me sick to hear of eating I had been dead heavy before and now I felt a sort of dreadful lightness which would not suffer me to walk I drifted like a gossamer the ground seemed to me a cloud the hills a feather weight the air to have a current like a running burn which carried me to and fro With all that a sort of horror of despair sat on my mind so that I could have wept at my own helplessness

I saw Alan knitting his brows at me and supposed it was in anger and that gave me a pang of light headed fear like what a child may have I remember too that I was smiling and could not stop smiling hard as I tried for I thought it was out of place at such a time But my good companion had nothing in his mind but kindness and the next moment two of the gillies had me by the arms and I began to be carried forward with great swiftness (or so it appeared to me although I dare say it was slowly enough in truth) through a labyrinth of dreary glens and hollows and into the heart of that dismal mountain of Ben Alder

XXIII

CLUNY'S CAGE

WE CAME at last to the foot of an exceeding steep wood which scrambled up a craggy hillside and was crowned by a naked precipice

It's here said one of the guides and we struck up hill

The trees clung upon the slope like sailors on the shrouds of a ship and their trunks were like the rounds of a ladder by which we mounted

Quite at the top and just before the rocky face of the cliff sprang above the foliage we found that strange house which was known in the country as

Cluny's Cage The trunks of several trees had been wattled across the intervals strengthened with stakes and the ground behind this barricade levelled up with earth to make the floor A tree which grew out from the hillside was the living centre beam of the roof The walls were of wattle and covered with moss The whole house had something of an egg shape and it half hung half stood in that steep hillside thicket like a wasp's nest in a green hawthorn

Within it was large enough to shelter five or six persons with some comfort A projection of the cliff had been cunningly employed to be the fireplace

and the smoke rising against the face of the rock and being not dissimilar in colour readily escaped notice from below

This was bu one of Cluny s hiding places he had caves besides and under ground chambers in several parts of his country and following the reports of his scouts he moved from one to another as the soldiers drew near or moved away By this manner of living and thanks to the affection of his clan he had not only stayed all this time in society while so many others had fled or been taken and slain but stayed four or five years longer and only went to France at last by the express command of his master There he soon died and it is strange to reflect that he may have regretted his Cage upon Ben Alder

When we came to the door he was seated by his rock chimney watching a gillie about some cookery He was mighty plainly habited with a knitted night cap drawn over his ears and smoked a foul cutty pipe For all that he had the manners of a king and it was quite a sight to see him rise out of his place to welcome us

Well Mr Stewart come awa sir' said he and bring in your friend that as yet I dinna ken the name of

And how is yourself Cluny? said Alan I hope ye do brawly sir And I am proud to see ye and to present to ye my friend the Laird of Shaws Mr David Balfour

Alan never referred to my estate without a touch of a sneer when we were alone but with strangers he rang the words out like a herald

Step in by the both of ye gentlemen says Cluny I make ye welcome to my house which is a queer rude place for certain but one where I have entertained a royal personage Mr Stewart--ye doubtless ken the personage I have in my eye We'll take a dram for luck and as soon as this handless man of mine has the collops ready we'll dine and take a hand at the cartes as gentlemen should My life is a bit driegh says he pouring out the brandy I see little company and sit and twirl my thumbs and mind upon a great day that is gone by and weary for another great day that we all hope will be upon the road And so here's a toast to ye The Restoration!

Thereupon we all touched glasses and drank I am sure I wished no ill to King George and if he had been there himself in proper person it's like he would have done as I did No sooner had I taken out the dram than I felt hugely better and could look on and listen still a little mistily perhaps but no longer with the same groundless horror and distress of mind

It was certainly a strange place and we had a strange host In his long hiding Cluny had grown to have all manner of precise habits like those of an old maid He had a particular place where no one else must sit the Cage was arranged in a particular way which none must disturb cookery was one of his chief fancies and even while he was greeting us in he kept an eye to the collops

It appears he sometimes visited or received visits from his wife and one or two of his nearest friends under the cover of night but for the more part lived quite alone and communicated only with his sentinels and the gillies that waited on him in the Cage The first thing in the morning one of them, who was a barber came and shaved him and gave him the news of the

country of which he was immoderately greedy There was no end to his questions he put them as earnestly as a child and at some of the answers lughed out of all bounds of reason and would break out again laughing at the mere memory hours after the barber was gone

To be sure there might have been a purpose in his questions for though he was thus sequestered and like the other landed gentlemen of Scotland stripped by the late Act of Parliament of legal powers he still exercised a patriarchal justice in his clan Disputes were brought to him in his hiding hole to be decided and the men of his country who would have snapped their fingers at the Court of Session laid aside revenge and paid down money at the bare word of this forfeited and hunted outlaw When he was angered which was often enough he gave his commands and breathed threats of punishment like any king and his gulis trembled and crouched away from him like children before a hasty father With each of them as he entered he ceremoniously shook hands both parties touching their bonnets at the same time in a military manner Altogether I had a fair chance to see some of the inner workings of a Highland clan and this with a proscribed fugitive chief his country conquered the troops riding upon all sides in quest of him sometimes within a mile of where he lay and when the least of the ragged fellows whom he rated and threatened could have made a fortune by betraying him

On that first day as soon as the collops were ready Cluny gave them with his own hand a squeeze of a lemon (for he was well supplied with luxuries) and bade us draw in to our meal

They said he meaning the collops are such as I gave His Royal Highness in this very house bating the lemon juice for at that time we were glad to get the meat and never fashed for kitchen * Indeed there were mair dragoons than lemons in my country in the year forty six

I do not know if the collops were truly very good but my heart rose against the sight of them and I could eat but little All the while Cluny entertained us with stories of Prince Charlie's stay in the Cage giving us the very words of the speakers and rising from his place to show us where they stood By these I gathered the Prince was a gracious spirited boy like the son of a race of polite kings but not so wise as Solomon I gathered too that while he was in the Cage he was often drunk so the fault that has since by all accounts made such a wreck of him had even then begun to show itself

We were no sooner done eating than Cluny brought out an old thumbed, greasy pack of cards such as you may find in a mean inn and his eyes brightened in his face as he proposed that we should fall to playing

Now this was one of the things I had been brought up to eschew like disgrace it being held by my father neither the part of a Christian nor yet of a gentleman to set his own livelihood and fish for that of others on the cast of painted cardboard To be sure I might have pleaded by fatigue which was excuse enough but I thought it behoved that I should bear a testimony I must have got very red in the face but I spoke steadily and told them I had

*Condiment

no call to be a judge of others but for my own part it was a matter in which I had no clearness

Cluny stopped mingling the cards What in devils name is this says he What kind of Whiggish canting talk is this for the house of Cluny Macpherson?

I will put my hand in the fire for Mr Balfour says Alan He is an honest and a mettle gentleman and I would have ye bear in mind who says it I bear a king s name says he cocking his hat and I and any that I call friend are company for the best But the gentleman is tired and should sleep if he has no mind to the cartes it will never hinder you and me And I m fit and willing sir to play ye any game that ye can name

Sir says Cluny in this poor house of mine I would have you to ken that any gentleman may follow his pleasure If your friend would like to stand on his head he is welcome And if either he or you or any other man is not preeesely satisfied I will be proud to step outside with him

I had no will that these two friends should cut their throats for my sake

Sir said I I am very wearied as Alan says and what s more as you are a man that likely has sons of your own I may tell you it was a promise to my father

Say nae mair say nae mair ' said Cluny and pointed me to a bed of heather in a corner of the Cage For all that he was displeased enough he looked at me askance and grumbled when he looked And indeed it must be owned that both my scruples and the words in which I declared them smacked somewhat of the Covenanter and were little in their place among wild Highland Jacobites

What with the brandy and the venison a strange heaviness had come over me and I had a kind of trance in which I continued almost the whole time of our stay in the Cage Sometimes I was broad awake and understood what passed sometimes I only heard voices or men snoring like the voice of a silly river and the plaids upon the wall dwindled down and swelled out again, like firelight shadows on the roof I must sometimes have spoken or cried out for I remember I was now and then amazed at being answered yet I was conscious of no particular nightmare only of a general black abiding horror —a horror of the place I was in and the bed I lay in and the plaids on the wall, and the voices and the fire and myself

The barber gillie who was a doctor too was called in to prescribe for me but as he spoke in Gaelic I understood not a word of his opinion and was too sick even to ask for a translation I knew well enough I was ill and that was all I cared about

I paid little heed while I lay in this poor pass But Alan and Cluny were most of the time at the cards and I am clear that Alan must have begun by winning for I remember sitting up and seeing them hard at it and a great glittering pile of as much as sixty or a hundred guineas on the table It looked strange enough to see all this wealth in the nest upon a cliffside wattled about growing trees And even then, I thought it seemed deep water for Alan to be

riding who had no better battle horse than a green purse and a matter of five pounds

The luck it seems changed on the second day About noon I was wakened as usual for dinner and as usual refused to eat and was given a dram with some bitter infusion which the barber had prescribed The sun was shining in at the open door of the Cage and this dazzled and offended me Cluny sat at the table biting the pack of cards Alan had stooped over the bed and had his face close to my eyes to which troubled as they were with the fever it seemed of the most shocking bigness

He asked me for a loan of my money

What for said I

Or just for a loan he said

But why I repeated I don't see

Hut David said Alan ye would nae grudge me a loan?

I would though if I had had my senses! But all I thought of then was to get his face away and I handed him my money

On the morning of the third day when we had been forty eight hours in the Cage I awoke with a great relief of spirits very weak and weary indeed but seeing things of the right size with their honest everyday appearance I had a mind to eat moreover rose from bed of my own movement and as soon as we had breakfasted stepped to the entry of the Cage and sat down outside in the top of the wood It was a grey day with a cool mild air and I sat in a dream all morning only disturbed by the passing by of Cluny's scouts and servants coming with provisions and reports for as the coast was at that time clear you might almost say he held court openly

When I returned he and Alan had laid the cards aside and were questioning a gillie and the chief turned about and spoke to me in the Gaelic

I have no Gaelic sir said I

Now since the card question everything I said or did had the power of annoying Cluny Your name has more sense than yourself then said he angrily for it's good Gaelic But the point is this My scout reports all clear in the south and the question is have ye the strength to go?

I saw cards on the table but no gold only a heap of little written papers and these all on Cluny's side Alan besides had an odd look like a man not very well content and I began to have a strong misgiving

I do not know if I am as well as I should be said I looking at Alan but the little money we have has a long way to carry us

Alan took his under lip into his mouth and looked upon the ground

David says he at last I've lost it there's the naked truth

'My money too' said I

'Your money too' says Alan with a groan 'Ye shouldnae have given it to me I'm daft when I get to the cartes

Hoot toot! hoot-toot said Cluny It was all daffing it's all nonsense Of course you'll have your money back again and the double of it if we'll make so free with me It would be a singular thing for me to keep it It's not to be supposed that I would be any hindrance to gentlemen in your situation that

would be a singular thing' cries he and began to pull gold out of his pocket with a mighty red face

Alan said nothing only looked on the ground

Will you step to the door with me sir said I

Cluny said he would be very glad and followed me readily enough but he looked flustered and put out

And now sir says I I must first acknowledge your generosity

Nonsensical nonsense' cries Cluny Where's the generosity? This is just a most unfortunate affair but what would ye have me do—boxed up in this beeskep of a cage of mine—but just set my friends to the cartes when I can get them? And if they lose of course it's not to be supposed—' And here he came to a pause

Yes said I if they lose you give them back their money and if they win they carry away yours in their pouches' I have said before that I grant your generosity but to me sir it's a very painful thing to be placed in this position

There was a little silence in which Cluny seemed always as if he was about to speak but said nothing All the time he grew redder and redder in the face

I am a young man said I and I ask your advice Advise me as you would your son My friend fairly lost this money after having fairly gained a far greater sum of yours can I accept it back again? Would that be the right part for me to play? Whatever I do you can see for yourself it must be hard upon a man of any pride

It's rather hard on me too Mr Balfour' said Cluny and ye give me very much the look of a man that has entrapped poor people to their hurt I wouldnae have my friends come to any house of mine to accept affronts to he cried with a sudden heat of anger nor yet to give them'

And so you see sir said I there is something to be said upon my side and this gambling is a very poor employ for the gentlefolks But I am still waiting your opinion

I am sure if ever Cluny hated any man it was David Balfour He looked me all over with a warlike eye and I saw the challenge at his lips But either my youth disarmed him or perhaps his own sense of justice Certainly it was a mortifying matter for all concerned and not least for Cluny the more credit that he took it as he did

Mr Balfour said he I think you are too nice and covenanting but for all that you have the spirit of a very pretty gentleman Upon my honest word ye may take this money—it's what I would tell my son—and here's my hand along with it'

XXIV

THE FLIGHT IN THE HEATHER THE QUARREL

ALAN AND I were put across Loch Errocht under cloud of night and went down its eastern shore to another hiding place near the head of Loch Rannoch whither we were led by one of the gillies from the Cage This fellow carried

all our luggage and Alan's great coat in the bargain trotting along under the burthen far less than the half of which used to weigh me to the ground like a stout nill pony with a feather, yet he was a man that in plain contest I could have broken on my knee

Doubtless it was a great relief to walk disencumbered and perhaps without that relief and the consequent sense of liberty and lightness I could not have walked at all I was but new arisen from a bed of sickness and there was nothing in the state of our affairs to hearten me for much exertion travelling as we did over the most dismal deserts in Scotland under a cloudy heaven, and with divided hearts among the travellers

For long we said nothing marching alongside or one behind the other each with a set countenance I angry and proud and drawing what strength I had from these two violent and sinful feelings Alan angry and ashamed ashamed that he had lost my money angry that I should take it so ill

The thought of a separation ran always the stronger in my mind and the more I approved of it the more ashamed I grew of my approval It would be a fine handsome generous thing indeed for Alan to turn round and say to me

Go I am in the most danger and my company only increases yours But for me to turn to the friend who certainly loved me and say to him You are in great danger I am in but little, your friendship is a burden go take your risks and bear your hardships alone— no that was impossible and even to think of it privily to myself made my cheeks to burn

And yet Alan had behaved like a child and (what is worse) a treacherous child Wheedling my money from me while I lay half conscious was scarce better than theft and yet here he was trudging by my side without a penny to his name and by what I could see quite blithe to sponge upon the money he had driven me to beg True I was ready to share it with him but it made me rage to see him count upon my readiness

These were the two things uppermost in my mind and I could open my mouth upon neither without black ungenerosity So I did the next worst and said nothing nor so much as looked once at my companion save with the tail of my eye

At last upon the other side of Loch Errocht going over a smooth rushy place where the walking was easy he could bear it no longer and came close to me

David says he this is no way for two friends to take a small accident I have to say that I'm sorry and so that's said And now if you have anything ye'd better say it

O says I I have nothing

He seemed disconcerted at which I was meanly pleased

No said he with rather a trembling voice but when I say I was to blame

Why of course ye were to blame said I coolly and you will bear me out that I have never reproached you

Never says he but ye ken very well that ye've done worse Are we to part? Ye said so once before Are ye to say it again? There's hills and heather

enough between here and the two seas David and I will own I'm no very
keen to stay where I'm no wanted

This pierced me like a sword and seemed to lay bare my private disloyalty

Alan Breck' I cried and then Do you think I am one to turn my back
on you in your chief need? You dursnt say it to my face My whole conduct's
there to give the lie to it It's true I fell asleep upon the muir, but that was
from weariness and you do wrong to cast it up to me—

Wrch is what I never did said Alan

But aside from that I continued what have I done that you should even
me to dogs by such a supposition? I never yet failed a friend, and it's not
likely I'll begin with you There are things between us that I can never
forget even if you can

I will only say this to ye David said Alan very quietly that I have long
been owing ye my life and now I owe ye money Ye should try to make that
burden light for me

This ought to have touched me and in a manner it did but the wrong
manner I felt I was behaving badly and was now not only angry with Alan,
but angry with myself in the bargain and it made me the more cruel

You ask me to speak said I Well then I will You own yourself that
you have done me a disservice I have had to swallow an affront I have never
reproached you I never named the thing till you did And now you blame
me cried I because I cannae laugh and sing as if I was glad to be affronted.
The next thing will be that I'm to go down upon my knees and thank you for
it! Ye should think more of others Alan Breck If ye thought more of others,
ye would perhaps speak less about yourself and when a friend that likes you
very well has passed over an offence without a word you would be blithe to let
it lie instead of making it a stick to break his back with By your own way of it,
it was you that was to blame then it shouldnae be you to seek the quarrel

Aweel said Alan say nae mair

And we fell back into our former silence and came to our journey's end,
and supped and lay down to sleep without another word

The gillie put us across Loch Rannoch in the dusk of the next day and
gave us his opinion as to our best route This was to get us up at once into the
tops of the mountains to go round by a circuit turning the heads of Glen
Lyon Glen Lochay and Glen Dochart and come down upon the lowlands by
Kippen and the upper waters of the Forth Alan was little pleased with a
route which led us through the country of his blood-foes the Glenorchy
Campbells He objected that by turning to the east we should come almost at
once among the Athole Stewarts a race of his own name and lineage although
following a different chief and come besides by a far easier and swifter way
to the place whither we were bound But the gillie who was indeed the chief
man of Cluny's scouts had good reasons to give him on all hands naming
the force of troops in every district and alleging finally (as well as I could
understand) that we should nowhere be so little troubled as in a country of
the Campbells

Alan gave way at last but with only half a heart "It's one of the dowiest

countries in Scotland said he There's naething there that I ken but heath and crows and Campbells But I see that ye're a man of some penetration and be it as ye please'

We set forth accordingly by this itinerary and for the best part of three nights travelled on eerie mountains and among the well heads of wild rivers often buried in mist almost continually blown and rained upon and not once cheered by any glimpse of sunshine By day we lay and slept in the drenching heather by night incessantly clambered upon breakneck hills and among rude crags We often wandered we were often so involved in fog that we must lie quiet till it lightened A fire was never to be thought of Our only food was drammach and a portion of cold meat that we had carried from the Cage and as for drink Heaven knows we had no want of water

This was a dreadful time rendered the more dreadful by the gloom of the weather and the country I was never warm my teeth chattered in my head I was troubled with a very sore throat such as I had on the isle I had a painful stitch in my side which never left me and when I slept in my wet bed with the rain beating above and the mud oozing below me it was to live over again in fancy the worst part of my adventures—to see the tower of Shaws lit by lightning Ransome carried below on the men's backs Shuan dying on the round house floor or Colin Campbell grasping at the bosom of his coat From such broken slumbers I would be aroused in the gloaming to sit up in the same puddle where I had slept and sup cold drammach the rain driving sharp in my face or running down my back in icy tricklets the mist enfolding us like as in a gloomy chamber—or perhaps if the wind blew falling suddenly apart and showing us the gulf of some dark valley where the streams were crying aloud.

The sound of an infinite number of rivers came up from all around In this steady rain the springs of the mountains were broken up every glen gushed water like a cistern every stream was in high spate and had filled and over flowed its channel During our night tramps it was solemn to hear the voices of them below in the valleys now booming like thunder now with an angry cry I could well understand the story of the Water Kelpie that demon of the streams who is fabled to keep wailing and roaring at the ford until the coming of the doomed traveller Alan I saw believed it or half believed it and when the cry of the river rose more than usually sharp I was little surprised (though of course I would still be shocked) to see him cross himself in the manner of the Catholics

During all these horrid wanderings we had no familiarity scarcely even that of speech The truth is that I was sickening for my grave which is my best excuse But besides that I was of an unforgiving disposition from my birth slow to take offense slower to forget it, and now incensed both against my companion and myself For the best part of two days he was unweariedly kind silent indeed but always ready to help and always hoping (as I could very well see) that my displeasure would blow by For the same length of time I stayed in myself nursing my anger roughly refusing his services and passing him over with my eyes as if he had been a bush or a stone

The second night or rather the peep of the third day found us upon a very open hill so that we could not follow our usual plan and lie down immediately to eat and sleep Before we had reached a place of shelter the grey had come pretty clear for though it still rained the clouds ran higher and Alan looking in my face showed some marks of concern

Ye had better let me take your pack said he for perhaps the ninth time since we had parted from the scout beside Loch Rannoch

I do very well I thank you said I as cold as ice

Alan flushed darkly I'll not offer it again he said 'I'm not a patient man David

I never said you were said I which was exactly the rude silly speech of a boy of ten

Alan made no answer at the time but his conduct answered for him Henceforth it is to be thought he quite forgave himself for the affair at Cluny s cocked his hat again walked jauntily whistling airs and looked at me upon one side with a provoking smile

The third night we were to pass through the western end of the country of Balquhidder It came clear and cold with a touch in the air like frost and a northerly wind that blew the clouds away and made the stars bright The streams were full of course and still made a great noise among the hills but I observed that Alan thought no more upon the Kelpie and was in high good spirits As for me the change of weather came too late I had lain in the mire so long that (as the Bible has it) my very clothes abhorred me I was dead weary deadly sick and full of pains and shiverings the chill of the wind went through me and the sound of it confused my ears In this poor state I had to bear from my companion something in the nature of a persecution He spoke a good deal and never without a taunt Whig was the best name he had to give me Here he would say here's a dub for ye to jump my Whiggle! I ken you're a fine jumper! And so on all the time with a gibing voice and face

I knew it was my own doing and no one else's but I was too miserable to repent I felt I could drag myself but little farther pretty soon I must lie down and die on these wet mountains like a sheep or a fox and my bones must whiten there like the bones of a beast My head was light perhaps but I began to love the prospect I began to glory in the thought of such a death alone in the desert with the wild eagles besieging my last moments Alan would repent then I thought he would remember when I was dead how much he owed me and the remembrance would be torture So I went like a sick silly and bad hearted schoolboy feeding my anger against a fellow man when I would have been better on my knees crying on God for mercy And at each of Alan's taunts I hugged myself Ah! thinks I to myself I have a better taunt in readiness when I lie down and die you will feel it like a buffet in your face, ah, what a revenge! ah how you will regret your ingratitude and cruelty!

All the while I was growing worse and worse Once I had fallen my legs simply doubling under me and this had struck Alan for the moment but I was afoot so briskly and set off again with such a natural manner, that he soon

forgot the incident Flushes of heat went over me and then spasms of shuddering The stitch in my side was hardly bearable At last I began to feel that I could tell myself no farther and with that there came on me all at once the wish to have it out with Alan let my anger blaze and be done with my life in a more sudden manner He had just called me Whig I stopped

Mr Stewart said I in a voice that quivered like a fiddle string you are older than I am and should know your manners Do you think it either very wise or very witty to cast my politics in my teeth? I thought where folk differed it was the part of gentlemen to differ civilly and if I did not I may tell you I could find a better taunt than some of yours

Alan had stopped opposite to me his hat cocked his hands in his breeches pockets his head a little on one side He listened smiling evilly as I could see by the starlight and when I had done he began to whistle a Jacobite air It was the air made in mockery of General Cope's defeat at Preston Pans —

*"Hey, Johnnie Cope, are ye wankin' yet?
And are your drums a beatin' yet?"*

And it came in my mind that Alan on the day of that battle had been engaged upon the royal side

Why do ye take that air Mr Stewart? said I Is that to remind me you have been beaten on both sides?

The air stopped on Alan's lips! 'David' said he

But it's time these manners ceased I continued and I mean you shall henceforth speak civilly of my King and my good friends the Campbells

I am a Stewart — began Alan

O! says I I ken ye bear a king's name But you are to remember since I have been in the Highlands I have seen a good many of those that bear it and the best I can say of them is this that they would be none the worse of wading

Do you know that you insult me? said Alan very low

I am sorry for that said I for I am not done and if you distaste the sermon I doubt the pirliecue* will please you as little You have been chased in the field by the grown men of my party it seems a poor kind of pleasure to outface a boy Both the Campbells and the Whigs have beaten you you have run before them like a hare It behoves you to speak of them as your betters

Alan stood quite still, the tails of his great coat clapping behind him in the wind

This is a pity he said at last. These are things said that cannot be passed over

I never asked you to' said I 'I am as ready as yourself

Ready said he

'Ready I repeated 'I am no blower and boaster like some that I could name Come on' And drawing my sword, I fell on guard as Alan himself had taught me

*A second sermon.

David' he cried "Are ye daft? I cannae draw upon ye David Its fair murder

That was your look out when you insulted me said I

It's the truth' cried Alan and he stood for a moment wringing his mouth in his hand like a man in sore perplexity It's the bare truth he said and drew his sword But before I could touch his blade with mine he had throw'n it from him and fallen to the ground Na na he kept saying na na—I cannae I cannae

At this the last of my anger oozed all out of me and I found myself only sick and sorry and blank and wondering at myself I would have given the world to take back what I had said but a word once spoken who can recapture it? I minded me of all Alan's kindness and courage in the past, how he had helped and cheered and borne with me in our evil davs and then recalled my own insults and saw that I had lost for ever that doughty friend At the same time the sickness that hung upon me seemed to redouble and the pang in my side was like a sword for sharpness I thought I must have swooned where I stood

This it was that gave me a thought No apology could blot out what I had said it was needless to think of one none could cover the offence but where an apology was vain a mere cry for help might bring Alan back to my side. I put my pride away from me Alan' I said if you cannae help me, I must just die here

He started up sitting and looked at me

It's true said I I'm by with it O let me get into the bield of a house—I'll can die there easier I had no need to pretend whether I chose or not, I spoke in a weeping voice that would have melted a heart of stone

Can ye walk? asked Alan

No said I not without help This last hour my legs have been fainting under me I've a stitch in my side like a red hot iron I cannae breathe right. If I die ye'll forgive me Alan? In my heart, I liked ye fine—even when I was the angriest

Wheesht wheesht! cried Alan Dinna say that! David man ye ken— He shut his mouth upon a sob Let me get my arm about ye He continued that's the way! Now lean upon me hard Gude kens where there's a house We're in Balwhidder too there should be no want of houses no nor friends houses here Do ye gang easier so Davie?

Ay said I I can be doing this way and I pressed his arm with my hand Again he came near sobbing Davie said he I'm no a right man at all I have neither sense nor kindness I couldnae see ye were dying on your feet, Davie ye'll have to try and forgive me

O man let's say no more about it? said I 'We're neither one or us to mend the other—that's the truth! We must just bear and forbear, man Alan O but my stitch is sore Is there nae house?

I'll find a house to ye David he said stoutly Well follow down the burn where there's bound to be houses My poor man will ye no be better on my back?

O Alan says I and me a good twelve inches taller?

Yere no such a thing cried Alan with a start There may be a trifling matter of an inch or two I'm no saying I'm just exactly what ye would call a tall man whatever and I dare say he added his voice tailing off in a laughable manner now when I come to think of it I dare say ye'll be just about right. Ay it'll be a foot or near hand or may be even mair'

It was sweet and laughable to hear Alan eat his words up in the fear of some fresh quarrel I could have laughed had not my stitch caught me so hard but if I had laughed I think I must have wept too

Alan cried I what makes ye so good to me? What makes ye care for such a thankless fellow?

Deed and I don't know said Alan For just precisely what I thought I liked about ye was that ye never quarrelled —and now I like ye better!

XXV

IN BALQUHIDDER

AT THE DOOR of the first house we came to Alan knocked which was no very safe enterprise in such a part of the Highlands as the Braes of Balquhidder No great clan held rule there it was filled and disputed by small septs and broken remnants and what they call chiefless folk driven into the wild country about the springs of Forth and Teith by the advance of the Campbells Here were Stewarts and Maclarens which came to the same thing for the Maclarens followed Alan's chief in war and made but one clan with Appin Here too were many of that old proscribed nameless red handed clan of the Macgregors They had always been ill considered and now worse than ever having credit with no side or party in the whole country of Scotland Their chief Macgregor of Macgregor was in exile the more immediate leader of that part of them about Balquhidder James More Rob Roy's eldest son lay waiting his trial in Edinburgh Castle they were in ill blood with Highlander and Lowlander with the Grahams the Maclarens and the Stewarts and Alan who took up the quarrel of any friend however distant was extremely wishful to avoid

Chance served us very well for it was to a household of Maclarens that we found where Alan was not only welcome for his name's sake but known by reputation Here then I was got to bed without delay and a doctor fetched who found me in a sorry plight But whether because he was a very good doctor or I a very young strong man I lay bedridden for no more than a week and before a month I was able to take the road again with a good heart

All this time Alan would not leave me though I often pressed him and indeed his foolhardiness in staying was a common subject of outcry with the two or three friends that were let into the secret He hid by day in a hole of the braes under a little wood and at night when the coast was clear would come into the house to visit me I need not say if I was pleased to see him,

Mrs Maclarens our hostess thought nothing good enough for such a guest and as Duncan Dhu (which was the name of our host) had a pair of pipes in his house and was much of a lover of music the time of my recovery was quite a festival and we commonly turned night into day

The soldiers let us be although once a party of two companies and some dragoons went by in the bottom of the valley where I could see them through the window as I lay in bed What was much more astonishing no magistrate came near me and there was no question put of whence I came or whether I was going and in that time of excitement I was as free of all inquiry as though I had lain in a desert Yet my presence was known before I left to all the people in Balquhidder and the adjacent parts (after the custom of the country) spreading the news among their neighbours The bills too had now been printed There was one pinned near the foot of my bed where I could read my own not very flattering portrait and in larger characters the amount of the blood money that had been set upon my life Duncan Dhu and the rest that knew that I had come here in Alan's company could have entertained no doubt of who I was and many others must have had their guess For though I changed my clothes I could not change my age or person and lowland boys of eighteen were not so rife in these parts of the world and above all about that time that they could fail to put one thing with another and connect me with the bill So it was at least Other folk keep a secret among two or three near friends and somehow it leaks out but among these clansmen, it is told to a whole countryside and they will keep it for a century

There was but one thing happened worth narrating and that is the visit I had of Robert Oig one of the sons of the notorious Rob Roy He was sought upon all sides on a charge of carrying a young woman from Balfron and marrying her (as was alleged) by force yet he stepped about Balquhidder like a gentleman in his own walled policy It was he who had shot James Maclarens at the plough stilts a quarrel never satisfied yet he walked into the house of his blood enemies as a rider* might into a public inn

Duncan had time to pass me word of who it was and we looked at one another in concern You should understand it was then close upon the time of Alan's coming the two were little likely to agree and yet if we sent word or sought to make a signal it was sure to arouse suspicion in a man under so dark a cloud as the Macgregor

He came in with a great show of civility but like a man among inferiors took off his bonnet to Mrs Maclarens but clapped it on his head again to speak to Duncan and having thus set himself (as he would have thought) in a proper light came to my bedside and bowed

I am given to know sir says he that your name is Balfour

They call me David Balfour said I at your service

I would give ye my name in return sir he replied but it's one somewhat blown upon of late days and it'll perhaps suffice if I tell ye that I am own brother to James More Drummond or Macgregor of whom ye will scarce have failed to hear

*Commercial traveller

No sir said I a little alarmed nor yet of your father Macgregor Campbell And I sat up and bowed in bed for I thought best to compliment him in case he was proud of having had an outlaw for his father

He bowed in return But what I am come to say he went on is this In the year 45 my brother raised a part of the Gregara and marched six companies to strike a stroke for the good side and the surgeon that marched with our clan and cured my brother's leg when it was broken in the brush at Preston Pans was a gentleman of the same name precisely as yourself He was brother to Balfour of Baith and if you are in any reasonable degree of nearness one of that gentleman's kin I have come to put myself and my people at your command

You are to remember that I knew no more of my descent than any cadger's dog my uncle to be sure had prated of some of our high connections but nothing to the present purpose and there was nothing left me but the bitter disgrace of owning that I could not tell

Robin told me shortly that he was sorry he had put himself about turned his back upon me without a sign of salutation and as he went towards the door I could hear him telling Duncan that I was only some kinless loon that didn't know his own father Angry as I was at these words and ashamed of my own ignorance I could scarce keep from smiling that a man who was under the lash of the law (and was indeed hanged some three years later) should be so nice as to the descent of his acquaintances

Just in the door he met Alan coming in and the two drew back and looked at each other like strange dogs They were neither of them big men but they seemed fairly to swell out with pride Each wore a sword and by a movement of his haunch thrust clear the hilt of it, so that it might be more readily grasped and the blade drawn

Mr Stewart I am thinking said Robin

Troth Mr Macgregor it's not a name to be ashamed of answered Alan I did not know ye were in my country sir says Robin

It sticks in mind that I am in the country of my friends the Maclarens says Alan

That's a kittle point returned the other There may be two words to say to that But I think I will have heard that you are a man of your sword?

Unless ye were born deaf Mr Macgregor ye will have heard a good deal more than that says Alan I am not the only man that can draw steel in Appin and when my kinsman and captain Ardshiel had a talk with a gentle man of your name not so many years back I could never hear that the Macgregor had the best of it

Do ye mean my father sir? says Robin

Well I wouldnae wonder said Alan The gentleman I have in mind had the ill taste to clamp Campbell to his name

My father was an old man returned Robin The match was unequal you and me would make a better pair sir

I was thinking that said Alan

I was half out of bed and Duncan had been hanging at the elbow of these

fighting cocks ready to intervene upon the least occasion But when that word was uttered it was a case of now or never and Duncan with something of a white face to be sure thrust himself between

Gentlemen said he I will have been thinking of a very different matter whateffer Here are my pipes and here are you two gentlemen who are baith acclaimed pipers It's an auld dispute which one of yes the best Here will be a braw chance to settle it

Whv sir said Alan still addressing Robin from whom indeed he had not so much as shifted his eyes nor yet Robin from him why sir says Alan, I think I will have heard some sough* of the sort Have ye music as folk say? Are ye a bit of a piper?

I can pipe like a Macrimmon' cries Robin

And that is a very bold word quoth Alan

I have made bolder words good before now returned Robin, and that against better adversaries

It is easy to try that says Alan

Duncan Dhu made haste to bring out the pair of pipes that was his principal possession and to set before his guests a mutton-ham and a bottle of that drink which they call Athole brose and which is made of old whiskey strained honey and sweet cream slowly beaten together in the right order and proportion The two enemies were still on the very breach of a quarrel but down they sat one upon each side of the peat fire with a mighty show of politeness Maclarens pressed them to taste his mutton ham and the wife's brose reminding them the wife was out of Athole and had a name far and wide for her skill in that confection But Robin put aside these hospitalities as bad for the breath

I would have ye to remark sir said Alan that I havenae broken bread for near upon ten hours which will be worse for the breath than any brose in Scotland

I will take no advantage Mr Stewart replied Robin Eat and drink I'll follow you

Each ate a small portion of the ham and drank a glass of the brose to Mrs. Maclarens and then after a great number of civilities Robin took the pipes and played a little spring in a very ranting manner

Ay ye can blow said Alan and taking the instrument from his rival he first played the same spring in a manner identical with Robins and then wandered into variations which as he went on he decorated with a perfect flight of grace notes such as pipers love and call the warblers

I had been pleased with Robins playing Alan's ravished me

'That's no very bad Mr Stewart said the rival but ye show a poor device in your warblers

Me' cried Alan the blood starting to his face I give ye the lie'

Do you own yourself beaten at the pipes then said Robin that ye seek to change them for the sword

And that's very well said Mr Macgregor returned Alan and in the

*Rumour

meantime (laying a strong accent on the word) I take back the lie I appeal to Duncan

Indeed we need appeal to naebody said Robin Ye're a far better judge than any MacLaren in Balquhidder for it's God's truth that you're a very creditable piper for a Stewart Hand me the pipes

Alan did as he asked and Robin proceeded to imitate and correct some part of Alan's variations which it seemed that he remembered perfectly

Av we ha'e music said Alan gloomily

And now be the judge yourself Mr Stewart said Robin and taking up the variations from the beginning he worked them throughout to so new a purpose with such ingenuity and sentiment and with so odd a fancy and so quick a knack in the grace notes that I was amazed to hear him

As for Alan his face grew dark and hot and he sat and gnawed his fingers like a rian under some leep affront Enough! he cried Ye can blow the pipes—make the most of that And he made as if to rise

But Robin only held out his hand as if to ask for silence and struck into the slow measure of a pibroch It was a fine piece of music in itself and nobly played but it seems besides it was a piece peculiar to the Appin Stewarts and a chief favourite with Alan The first notes were scarce out before there came a change in his face when the time quickened he seemed to grow restless in his seat and long before that piece was at an end the last signs of his anger died from him and he had no thought but for the music

Robin Oig he said when it was done ye are a great piper I am not fit to blow in the same kingdom with ye Body of me! ye have mair music in your sporran than I have in my head! And though it still sticks in my mind that I could maybe show ye another of it with the cold steel I warn ye beforehand—it'll no be fair! It would go against my heart to haggle a man that can blow the pipes as you can!

Thereupon the quarrel was made up all night long the brose was going and the pipes changing hands and the day had become pretty bright and the three men were none the better for what they had been taking before Robin as much as thought upon the road

XXVI

END OF THE FLIGHT WE PASS THE FORTH

THE MONTH as I have said was not yet out but it was already far through August and beautiful warm weather with every sign of an early and great harvest when I was pronounced able for my journey Our money was now run to so low an ebb that we must think first of all on speed for if we came not soon to Mr Rankeillor's or if when we came there he should fail to help me we must surely starve In Alan's view besides the hunt must have now greatly slackened and the line of the Forth and even Stirling Bridge which is the main pass over the river would be watched with little interest

It's a chief principle in military affairs said he to go where we are least expected Forth is our trouble ye ken the saying Forth bridles the wld Hielandman Well if we seek to creep round about the head of that river and come down by Kippen or Balfron it's just precisely there that they'll be looking to lay hands on us But if we stave on straight to the auld Brig of Stirling I'll lay my sword they let us pass unchallenged

The first night accordingly we pushed to the house of a MacLaren in Strathire a friend of Duncan's where we slept the twenty first of the month and whence we set forth again about the fall of night to make another easy stage The twenty second we lay in a heather bush on the hillside in Lam Var within view of a herd of deer the happiest ten hours of sleep in a fine breathing sunshine and on bone dry ground that I have ever tasted That night we struck Allan Water and followed it down and coming to the edge of the hills saw the whole Carse of Stirling underfoot as flat as a pancake with the town and castle on a hill in the midst of it and the moon shin'ng on the Links of Forth

Now said Alan I kenna if ye care but ye're in your own land again We passed the Hieland Line in the first hour and now if we could but pass yon crooked water we might cast our bonnets in the air

In Allan Water near by where it falls into the Forth we found a little sandy islet overgrown with burdock butterbur and the like low plants that would just cover us if we lay flat Here it was we made our camp within plain view of Stirling Castle whence we could hear the drums beat as some part of the garrison paraded Shearers worked all day in a field on one side of the river and we could hear the stones going on the hooks and the voices and even the words of the men talking It behoved to lie close and keep silent But the sand of the little isle was sun warm the green plants gave us shelter for our heads we had food and drink in plenty and to crown all we were within sight of safety

As soon as the shearers quit work and the dusk began to fall we waded ashore and struck for the Bridge of Stirling keeping to the fields and under the field fences

The bridge is close under the castle hill an old high narrow bridge with pinnacles along the parapet and you may conceive with how much interest I looked upon it not only as a place famous in history but as the very doors of salvation to Alan and myself The moon was not yet up when we came there a few lights shone along the front of the fortress and lower down a fewer lighted windows in the town but it was all mighty still and there seemed to be no guard upon the passage

I was for pushing straight across but Alan was more wary

It looks unco quiet said he but for all that we'll lie down here cannily behind a dyke and make sure

So we lay for about a quarter of an hour whiles whispering whiles lying still and hearing nothing earthly but the washing of the water on the piers At last there came by an old hobbling woman with a crutch stick who first stopped a little close to where we lay and bemoaned herself and the long way

she had travelled and then set forth again up the steep spring of the bridge. The woman was so little and the night still so dark that we soon lost sight of her only heard the sound of her steps and her stick and a cough that she had by fits draw slow farther away

She's bound to be across now I whispered

No said Alan her foot still sounds boss* upon the bridge

And just then— Who goes cried a voice and we heard the butt of a musket rattle on the stones I must suppose the sentry had been sleeping so that had we tried we might have passed unseen but he was awake now and the chance forfeited

'This'll never do' said Alan This'll never never do for us David

And without another word he began to crawl away through the fields and a little after being well out of eyeshot got to his feet again and struck along a road that led to the eastward I could not conceive what he was doing and indeed I was so sharply cut by the disappointment that I was little likely to be pleased with anything A moment back and I had seen myself knocking at Mr Rankeillor's door to claim my inheritance like a hero in a ballad and here was I back again a wandering hunted blackguard on the wrong side of Forth

Well said I

Well said Alan what would ye have? They're none such fools as I took them for We have still the Forth to pass Davie—w weary fall the rains that fed and the hillsides that guided it!

And whv go east said I

On just upon the chance! said he If we cannae pass the river we'll have to see what we can do for the firth

There are fords upon the river and none upon the firth said I

To be sure there are fords and a bridge for bye quoth Alan and of what service when they are watched

Well said I but a river can be swum

By them that have the skill of it returned he but I have yet to hear that either you or me is much of a hand at that exercise and for my own part, I swim like a stone

I'm not up to you in talking back Alan I said but I can see we're making bad worse If it's hard to pass a river it stands to reason it must be worse to pass a sea

But there's such a thing as a boat, says Alan or I'm the more deceived

Ay and such a thing as money says I But for us that have neither one nor other they might just as well not have been invented

Ye think so said Alan

I do that said I

David said he ye're a man of small invention and less faith But let me set my wits upon the hone and if I cannae beg borrow nor steal a boat I'll make one!

I think I see ye! said I And what's more than all that if ye pass a bridge

*Hollow

it can tell no tales but if we pass the firth there's a boat on the wrong side—somebody must have brought it—the courtrv side will all be in a bizz—

Man' cried Alan if I make a boat I'll make a body to take it back again' So deave me with no more of your nonsense but walk (for that's what you've got to do)—and let Alan think for ye

All night then we walked through the north side of the Carse under the high line of the Ochil mountains and by Alloa and Clackmannan and Culross all of which we avoided and about ten in the morning mighty hungry and tired came to the little clachan of Limekilns This is a place that sits near in by the waterside and looks across the Hope to the town of the Queen's Ferry Smoke went up from both of these and from other villages and farms upon all lands The fields were being reaped two ships lay anchored and boats were coming and going on the Hope It was altogether a right pleasant sight to me and I could not take my fill of gazing at these comfortable green cultivated hills and the busy people both of the field and sea

For all that there was Mr Rankellar's house on the south shore where I had no doubt wealth awaited me and here was I upon the north shore clad in poor enough attire of an outlandish fashion with three silver shillings left to me of all my fortune a price set upon my head and an outlawed man for my sole company

O Alan said I to think of it' Over there there's all that heart could want waiting me and the birds go over and the boats go over—all that please can go but just me only' O man but it's a heart break'

In Limekilns we entered a small change house which we only knew to be a public by the wand over the door and bought some bread and cheese from a good looking lass that was the servant This we carried with us in a bundle meaning to sit and eat it in a bush of wood on the sea shore that we saw some third part of a mile in front As we went I kept looking across the water and sighing to myself and though I took no heed of it, Alan had fallen into a muse At last he stopped in the way

Did ye take heed of the lass we bought this of? says he tapping on the bread and cheese

To be sure said I and a bonny lass she was

Ye thought that' cried he Man David that's good news

In the name of all that's wonderful why so' says I What good can that do?

Well said Alan with one of his droll looks I was rather in hopes it would maybe get us that boat

If it were the other way about it would be liker it said I

That's all that you ken you see said Alan I don't want the lass to fall in love with ye I want her to be sorry for ye David to which end there is no manner of need that she should take you for a beauty Let me see (looking me curiously over) I wish ye were a wee bit paler but apart from that ye'll do fine for my purpose—ye have a fine hang dog rag and tatter clappermaclaw kind of look to ye as if ye had stolen the coat from a potato bogle Come right about and back to the change house for that boat of ours

I followed him laughing

David Balfour said he were a very funny gentleman by your way of it, and this is a very funny employ for we no doubt for all that if ye have any affection for my neck (to say nothing of your own) ye will perhaps be kind enough to take this matter responsibly I am going to do a bit of play acting the bottom ground of which is just exactly as serious as the gallows for the pair of us So bear it if ye please in mind and conduct yourself according

Well well said I have it as you will

As we got near the clachan he made me take his arm and hang upon it like one almost helpless with weariness and by the time he pushed open the change house door he seemed to be half carrying me The maid appeared surprised (as well she might be) at our speedy return but Alan had no words to pare for her in explanation helped me to a chair called for a tass of brandy with which he fed me in little sips and then breaking up the bread and cheese helped me to eat it like a nursery lass the whole with that grave concerned affectionate countenance that might have imposed upon a judge It was small wonder if the maid were taken with the picture we presented of a poor sick overwrought lad and his most tender comrade She drew quite near and stood leaning with her back on the next table

What's wrong with him said she at last

Alan turned upon her to my great wonder with a kind of fury Wrong cries he He's walked more hundreds of miles than he has hairs upon his chin and slept oftener in wet heather than dry sheets Wrong quo she! Wrong enough I would think! Wrong indeed! and he kept grumbling to himself as he fed me like a man ill pleased

He's young for the like of that said the maid

Ower young said Alan with his back to her

He would be better riding says she

And where could I get a horse to him? cried Alan turning on her with the same appearance of fury Would ye have me steal?

I thought this roughness would have sent her off in dudgeon as indeed it closed her mouth for the time But my companion knew very well what he was doing and for as simple as he was in some things of life had a great fund of roguishness in such affairs as these

Ye neednae tell me she said at last— ye're gentry'

Well said Alan softened a little (I believe against his will) by this artless comment and suppose we were? Did you ever hear that gentrice put money in folk's pockets?

She sighed at this as if she were herself some disinherited great lady No says she that's true indeed

I was all this while chafing at the part I played and sitting tongue tied between shame and merriment but somehow at this I could hold in no longer and bade Alan let me be for I was better already My voice stuck in my throat for I ever hated to take part in lies but my embarrassment helped on the plot for the lass no doubt set down my husky voice to sickness and fatigue

Has he nae frierds? said she in a tearful voice

That has he so' cried Alan if we could but win to them'—friends and rich friends beds to lie in food to eat doctors to see him—and here he must tramp in the dubs and sleep in the heather like a beggarman

And why that says the lass

My dear said Alan I cannae very safely say but I'll tell ye what I'll do instead says he I'll whistle ye a bit tune And with that he leaned pretty far over the table and in a mere breath of a whistle but wi h a wonderful pretty sentiment gave her a few bars of Charlie is my darling

Wheesht says she and looked over her shoulder to the door

That's it said Alan

And him so young' cried the lass

He's old enough to— and Alan struck his forefinger on the back part of his neck meaning that I was old enough to lose my head

It would be a black shame 'she cried flush.ng high

It's what will be though said Alan unless we manage the better

At this point the lass turned and ran out of that part of the house leaving us alone together Alan in high good humour at the furthering of his schemes and I in bitter dudgeon at being called a Jacobite and treated like a child

Alan I cried I can stand no more of this

Ye'll have to sit it then Davie said he For if ye upset the pot now ye may scrape your own life out of the fire but Alan Breck is a dead man

This was so true that I could only groan and even my groan served Alan's purpose for it was overheard by the lass as she came flying in again with a dish of white puddings and a bottle of strong ale

Poor lamb' says she and had no sooner set the meat before us than she touched me on the shoulder with a little friendly touch as much as to bid me cheer up Then she told us to fall to and there would be no more to pay for the inn was her own or at least her father's and he was gone for the day to Pittencrieff We waited for no second bidding for bread and cheese are but cold comfort and the puddings smelt excellently well and while we sat and ate she took up that same place by the next table looking on and thinking and frowning to herself and drawing the string of her apron through her hand

I'm thinking ye have rather a long tongue she said at last to Alan

Ay' said Alan but ye see I ken the folk I speak to

I would never betray ye said she if ye mean that

No said he ye're not that kind But I'll tell ye what ye would do ye would help

I couldnae said she shaking her head Na I couldnae

No said he but if ye could?

She answered him nothing

Look here my lass said Alan there are boats in the kingdom of Fife for I saw two (no less) upon the beach as I came in by your town's end Now if we could have the use of a boat to pass under cloud of night into Lothian and some secret decent kind of a man to bring that boat again and keep his counsel there would be two souls saved—mine to all likelihood—his to a dead surely If we lack that boat we have but three shillings left in this wide world

and where to go and how to do and what other place there is for us except the chains of the gibbet—I give you my naked word I kenna' Shall we go wanting lassie? Are ye to lie in your warm bed and think upon us when the wind gowis in the chimney and the rain tirls on the roof? Are ye to eat your meat by the cheeks of a red fire and think upon this poor sick lad of mine biting his finger ends on a blae muir for cauld and hunger Sick or sound he must ave be moving with the death grapple at his throat he must aye be trailing in the rain on the long roads and when he gants his last on a rickle of cauld stanes there will be nae friends near him but only me and God

At this appeal I could see the lass was in great trouble of mind being tempted to help us and yet in some fear she might be helping malefactors and so now I determined to step in myself and to allay her scruples with a portion of the truth

Did ever you hear said I of Mr Rankeillor of the Ferry?
Rankeillor the writer said she I daursay that'

Well said I it's to his door that I am bound so you may judge by that if I am an ill doer and I will tell you more that though I am indeed by a dreadful error in some peril of my life King George has no truer friend in all Scotland than myself

Her face cleared up mightly at this, although Alan's darkened

That's more than I would ask said she Mr Rankeillor is a kennt man
And she bade us finish our meat, get clear of the clachan as soon as might be
and lie close in the bit wood on the sea beach And ye can trust me says she
I'll find some means to put you over

At this we waited for no more but shook hands with her upon the bargain, made short work of the puddings and set forth again from Limekilns as far as to the wood It was a small piece of perhaps a score of elders and hawthorns and a few young ashes not thick enough to veil us from passers by upon the road or beach Here we must lie however making the best of the brave warm weather and the good hopes we now had of a deliverance and planning more particularly what remained for us to do

We had but one trouble all day when a strolling piper came and sat in the same wood with us a red faced blear eyed drunken dog with a great bottle of whiskey in his pocket and a long story of wrongs that had been done him by all sorts of persons from the Lord President of the Court of Session who had denied him justice down to the Baileys of Inverkeithing who had given him more of it than he desired It was impossible but he should conceive some suspicion of two men lying all day concealed in a thicket and having no business to allege As long as he stayed there he kept us in hot water with prying questions and after he was gone as he was a man not very likely to hold his tongue we were in the greater impatience to be gone ourselves

The day came to an end with the same brightness the night fell quiet and clear lights came out in houses and hamlets and then one after another began to be put out but it was past eleven and we were long since strangely tortured with anxieties before we heard the grinding of oars upon the rowing pins At that we looked out and saw the lass herself coming rowing to us in a

boat She had trusted no one with our affairs not even her sweetheart if she had one but as soon as her father was asleep had left the house by a window stolen a neighbour's boat and come to our assistance single handed

I was abashed how to find expression for my thanks but she was no less abashed at the thought of hearing them begged us to lose no time and to hold our peace saying (very properly) that the heart of our matter was in haste and silence and so what with one thing and another she had set us on the Lothian shore not far from Carriden had shaken hands with us and was out again at sea and rowing for Limekilns before there was one word said either of her service or our gratitude

Even after she was gone we had nothing to say as indeed nothing was enough for such a kindness Only Alan stood a great while upon the shore shaking his head

It is a very fine lass he said at last David it is a very fine lass And a matter of an hour later as we were lying in a den on the seashore and I had been already dozing he broke out again in commendations of her character For my part I could say nothing she was so simple a creature that my heart smote me both with remorse and fear remorse because we had traded upon her ignorance and fear lest we should have anyway involved her in the dangers of our situation

XXVII

I COME TO MR RANKEILLOR

THE NEXT DAY it was agreed that Alan should fend for himself till sunset but as soon as it began to grow dark he should lie in the fields by the roadside near to Newhalls and stir for naught until he heard me whistling At first I proposed I should give him for a signal the Bonnie House of Airlie which was a favourite of mine but he objected that as the piece was very commonly known any ploughman might whistle it by accident and taught me a little fragment of a Highland air which has run in my head from that day to this and will likely run in my head when I lie dying Every time it comes to me it takes me off to that last day of my uncertainty with Alan sitting up in the bottom of the den whistling and beating the measure with a finger and the grey of the dawn coming on his face

I was in the long street of Queen's Ferry before the sun was up It was a fairly built burgh the houses of good stone many slated the town hall not so fine, I thought as that of Peebles nor yet the street so noble but take it altogether, it put me to shame for my foul tatters

As the morning went on and the fires to be kindled and the windows to open, and the people to appear out of the houses my concern and despondency grew ever the blacker I saw now that I had no grounds to stand upon and no clear proof of my rights nor so much as of my own identity If it was all a bubble, I was indeed sorely cheated and left in a sore pass Even if things were as I

conceived it would in all likelihood take time to establish my contentions and what time had I to spare with less than three shillings in my pocket and a condemned hunted man upon my hands to ship out of the country Truly if my hope broke with me it might come to the gallows yet for both of us And as I continued to walk up and down and saw people looking askance at me upon the street or out of windows and nudging or speaking one to another with smiles I began to take a fresh apprehension that it might be no easy matter even to come to speech of the lawyer far less to convince him of my story

For the life of me I could not muster up the courage to address any of these reputable burghers I thought shame even to speak with them in such a pickle of rags and dirt and if I had asked for the house of a man as Mr Rankeillor I supposed they would have burst out laughing in my face So I went up and down and through the street and down to the harbour side like a dog that had lost its master with a strange gnawing in my inwards and every now and then a movement of despair It grew to be high day at last perhaps nine in the forenoon and I was worn with these wanderings and chanced to have stopped in front of a very good house on the landward side a house with beautiful clear glass windows flowering knots upon the sills the walls new marled* and a chase dog sitting yawning on the step like one that was at home Well I was even envying this dumb brute when the door fell open and there issued forth a shrewd ruddy kindly consequential man in a well powdered wig and spectacles I was in such a plight that no one set eyes on me once but he looked at me again and this gentleman as it proved was so much struck with my poor appearance that he came straight up to me and asked me what I did

I told him I was come to the Queen's Ferry on business and taking heart of grace asked him to direct me to the house of Mr Rankeillor

Why says he that is his house that I have just come out of and for a rather singular chance I am that very man

Then sir said I I have to beg the favour of an interview

I do not know your name said he nor yet your face

My name is David Balfour said I

'David Balfour' he repeated in rather a high tone like one surprised And where have you come from Mr David Balfour he asked looking me pretty drily in the face

I have come from a great many strange places sir said I but I think it would be as well to tell you where and how in a more private manner

He seemed to muse awhile holding his lip in his hand and looking now at me and now upon the causeway of the street

Yes says he that will be the best no doubt And he led me back with him into his house cried out to someone whom I could not see that he would be engaged all morning and brought me into a little dusty chamber full of books and documents Here he sat down and bade me be seated though I thought he looked a little ruefully from his clean chair to my muddy rags 'And now says he if you have any business pray be brief and come swiftly

*Newly rough cast

o the point *Nee gemino belli in Tro, iu n or litor ab o o*—do you understand that says he with a keen look

I will even do as Horace says sir I answered smiling and carry you *in ecclias res* He nodded as if he was well pleased and indeed his scrap of Latin had been set to test me For all that and though I was somewhat encouraged the blood came in my face when I added I have reason to believe myself some right on the estate of Shaws

He got a paper book out of a drawer and set it before him open Well said he

But I had shot my bolt and sat speechless

Come come Mr Balfour said he you must continue Where were you born

In Essenden sir said I the year 173, the 11th of March

He seemed to follow this statement in his paper book but what that meant I knew not Your father and mother said he

My father was Alexander Balfour school master of that place said I and my mother Grace Pitarrow I think her people were from Angus

Have you any papers proving your identity asked Mr Rankeillor

No sir said I but they are in the hands of Mr Campbell the minister and could be readily produced Mr Campbell too would give me his word and for that matter I do not think my uncle would deny me

Meaning Mr Ebenezer Balfour says he

The same said I

Whom you have seen he asked

By whom I was received into his own house I answered

Did you ever meet a man of the name of Hoseason asked Mr Rankeillor

I did so sir for my sins said I for it was by his means and procurement of my uncle that I was kidnapped within sight of the town carried to sea suffered shipwreck and a hundred other hardships and stand before you to day in this poor accoutrement

You say you were shipwrecked said Rankeillor where was that

Off the south end of the Isle of Mull said I The name of the isle on which I was cast up is the Island of Earraid

Ah' says he smiling you are deeper than me in the geography But so far I may tell you this agrees pretty exactly with other information that I hold But you say you were kidnapped in what sense

In the plain meaning of the word sir said I I was on my way to your house when I was trepanned on board the brig cruelly struck down thrown below and knew no more of anything till we were far at sea I was destined for the plantations a fate that in God's providence I have escaped

The brig was lost on June the 27th says he looking in his book and we are now at August the 24th Here is a considerable hiatus Mr Balfour of near upon two months It has already caused a vast amount of trouble to your friends and I own I shall not be very well contented until it is set right

Indeed sir said I these months are very easily filled up but yet before I told my story I would be glad to know that I was talking to a friend

This is to argue in a circle said the lawyer I cannot be convinced till I have heard you I cannot be your friend till I am properly informed If you were more trustful it would better befit your time of life And you know Mr Balfour we have a proverb in the country that evil doers are aye evil dreaders

You are not to forget sir ' said I, that I have already suffered by trustfulness and was shipped off to be a slave by the very man that (if I rightly understand) is your employer

All this while I had been gaining ground with Mr Rankeillor and in proportion as I gained ground gaining confidence But at this sally which I made with something of a smile myself he fairly laughed aloud

No no said he it is not so bad as that. *Fui, non sum* I was indeed your uncle's man of business but while you (*imberbis juvenis custode remoto*) were gallivanting in the west a good deal of water has run under the bridges and if your ears did not sing it was not for lack of being talked about On the very day of your sea disaster Mr Campbell stalked into my office demanding you from all the winds I had never heard of your existence but I had known your father and from matters in my competence (to be touched upon here after) I was disposed to fear the worst Mr Ebenezer admitted having seen you declared (what seemed improbable) that he had given you considerable sums and that you had started for the continent of Europe intending to fulfill your education which was probable and praiseworthy Interrogated how you had come to send no word to Mr Campbell he deposed that you had expressed a great desire to break with your past life Further interrogated where you now were protested ignorance but believed you were in Leyden That is a close sum of his replies I am not exactly sure that anyone believed him continued Mr Rankeillor with a smile and in particular he so much disrelished some expressions of mine that (in a word) he showed me to the door We were then at a full stand for whatever shrewd suspicions we might entertain we had no shadow of probation In the very article comes Captain Hoseason with the story of your drowning whereupon all fell through with no consequences but concern to Mr Campbell injury to my pocket and another blot upon your uncle's character which could very ill afford it And now Mr Balfour said he you understand the whole process of these matters and can judge for yourself to what extent I may be trusted

Indeed he was more pedantic than I can represent him and placed more scraps of Latin in his speech but it was all uttered with a fine geniality of eye and manner which went far to conquer my distrust Moreover I could see he treated me as if I was myself beyond a doubt so that first point of my identity seemed fully granted

Sir said I if I tell you my story I must commit a friend's life to your discretion Pass me your word that it shall be sacred and for what touches myself I would ask no better guarantee than just your face

He passed me his word very seriously But said he these are rather alarming prolocutions and if there are in your story any little jostles to the law I would beg you to bear in mind that I am a lawyer, and pass lightly

Thereupon I told him my story from the first he listened with his spectacles thrust up and his eyes closed so that I sometimes feared he was asleep But in such matter¹ he heard every word (as I found afterward) with such quickness of hearing and precision of memory that often surprised me Even strange or 'andis²' Gaelic names heard for that time only he remembered and would remind me of years after Yet when I called Alan Breck in full we had an odd scene The name of Alan had of course rung through Scotland with the news of the Appin murder and the offer of reward and it had no sooner escaped me than the lawyer moved in his seat and opened his eyes

I would name no unnecessary names Mr Balfour said he above all of Highlanders many of whom are obnoxious to the law

Well it might have been better not said I but since I have let it slip I may as well continue

Not at all said Mr Rankeillor I am somewhat dull of hearing as you may have remarked and I am far from sure I caught the name exactly We will call your friend if you please Mr Thomson—that there may be no reflections And in future I would take some such way with any Highlander that you may have to mention—dead or alive

By this I saw he must have heard the name all too clearly and had already guessed I might be coming to the murder If he chose to play this part of ignorance it was no matter of mine so I smiled said it was no very Highland-sounding name and consented Through all the rest of my story Alan was Mr Thomson which amused me the more as it was a piece of policy after his own heart James Stewart in like manner was mentioned under the style of Mr Thomson's kinsman Colin Campbell passed as a Mr G'en and to Cluny when I came to that part of my tale I gave the name of Mr Jameson a Highland Chief It was truly the most open farce and I wondered that the lawyer should care to keep it up but after all it was quite in the taste of that age when there were two parties in the State and quiet persons with no very high opinions of their own sought out every cranny to avoid offence to either

Well well said the lawyer when I had quite done This is a great epic, a great Odyssey of yours You must tell it sir in a sound Latinity when your scholarship is riper or in English if you please though for my part I prefer the stronger tongue You have rolled much *quae regio in terris*—what parish in Scotland (to make a homely translation) has not been filled with your wanderings? You have shown besides a singular aptitude for getting into false positions and yes upon the whole for behaving well in them This Mr Thomson seems to me a gentleman of some choice qualities though perhaps a trifle bloody minded It would please me none the worse if (with all his merits) he were soured in the North Sea for the man Mr David is a sore embarrassment But you are doubtless quite right to adhere to him indubitably he adhered to you *It comes*—we may say—he was your true companion nor less *paribus cursi vestigia fit*, for I daresay you would both take an orra thoughts upon the gallows Well well these days are fortunately by and I think (speaking humanly) that you are near the end of your troubles

As he thus moralised on my adventures he looked upon me with so much

humour and benignity that I could scarce contain my satisfaction I had been so long wandering with lawless people and making my bed upon the hills and under the bare sky that to sit once more in a clean covered house and to talk amicably with a gentleman in broadcloth seemed mighty elevations Even as I thought so my eye fell on my unseemly tatters and I was once more plunged in confusion But the lawyer saw and understood me He rose called over the stair to lay another plate for Mr Balfour would stay to dinner and led me into a bedroom in the upper part of the house Here he set before me water and soap and a comb and laid out some clothes that belonged to his son and, here with another apposite tag he left me to my toilet

XXVIII

I GO IN QUEST OF MY INHERITANCE

I MADE what change I could in my appearance and blithe was I to look in the glass and find the beggar man a thing of the past, and David Balfour come to life again And yet I was ashamed of the change too and above all of the borrowed clothes When I had done Mr Rankeillor caught me on the stair made me his compliments and had me again into the cabinet

Sit ye down Mr David said he and now that you are looking a little more like yourself let me see if I can find you any news You will be wondering no doubt about your father and your uncle? To be sure it is a singular tale and the explanation is one that I blush to have to offer you For says he really with embarrassment the matter hinges on a love affair

Truly said I I cannot very well join that notion with my uncle

But your uncle Mr David was not always old replied the lawyer and what may perhaps surprise you more not always ugly He had a fine gallant air people stood in their doors to look after him as he went by upon a mettle horse I have seen it with these eyes and I ingenuously confess not altogether without envy for I was a plain lad myself and a plain man's son and in those days it was a case of *Odi te, qui bellus es, Sabelle*

It sounds like a dream said I

Ay ay said the lawyer that is how it is with youth and age Nor was that all but he had a spirit of his own that seemed to promise great things in the future In 1715 what must he do but run away to join the rebels? It was your father that pursued him found him in a ditch and brought him back *multum gementem* to the mirth of the whole country However *majora canamus*—the two lads fell in love and that with the same lady Mr Ebenezer who was the admired and the beloved and the spoiled one made no doubt mighty certain of the victory and when he found he had deceived himself screamed like a peacock The whole country heard of it now he lay sick at home with his silly family standing round the bed in tears, now he rode from public house to public house and shouted his sorrows into the lug of Tom Dick and Harry Your father Mr David was a kind gentleman, but he was weak dolefully

He took all this folly with a long countenance and one day—by your leave!—resigned the lady. She was no such fool however it's from her you must inherit your excellent good sense and she refused to be bandied from one to another. Both got upon their knees to her and the upshot of the matter for that while was that she showed both of them the door. That was in August dear me! the same year I came from college. The scene must have been highly farcical.

I thought myself it was a silly business but I could not forget my father had a hand in it. Surely sir it had some note of tragedy, said I.

Why no sir not at all returned the lawyer. For tragedy implies some ponderable matter in dispute some *dignus iudicis nodus* and this piece of work was all about the petulance of a young ass that had been spoiled and wanted nothing so much as to be tied up and soundly belted. However that was not your father's view and the end of it was that from concession to concession on your father's part and from one height to another of squalling sentimental selfishness upon your uncle's they came at last to drive a sort of bargain from whose ill results you have recently been smarting. The one man took the lady the other the estate. Now Mr David they talk a great deal of charity and generosity but in this disputable state of life I often think the happiest consequences seem to flow when a gentleman consults his lawyer and takes all the law allows him. Anyhow this piece of Quixotry on your father's part as it was unjust in itself has brought forth a monstrous family of injustices. Your father and mother lived and died poor folk you were poorly reared and in the meanwhile what a time it has been for the tenants of the estate of Shaws! And I might add (if it was a matter I cared much about) what a time for Mr Ebenezer!

And yet that is certainly the strangest part of all said I that a man's nature should thus change.

True said Mr Rankeillor. And yet I imagine it was natural enough. He could not think that he had played a handsome part. Those who knew the story gave him the cold shoulder those who knew it not seeing one brother disappear and the other succeed in the estate raised a cry of murder so that upon all sides he found himself evicted. Money was all he got by his bargain well he came to think the more of money. He was selfish when he was young he is selfish now that he is old and the latter end of all these pretty manners and fine feelings you have seen for yourself.

Well sir said I and in all this what is my position?

The estate is yours beyond a doubt replied the lawyer. It matters nothing what your father signed you are the heir of entail. But your uncle is a man to fight the indefensible and it would be likely your identity that he would call in question. A lawsuit is always expensive and a family lawsuit always scandalous besides which if any of your doings with your friend Mr Thomson were to come out we might find that we had burned our fingers. The kidnapping to be sure would be a court card upon our side if we could only prove it. But it may be difficult to prove and my advice (upon the whole) is to make a very easy bargain with your uncle perhaps even leaving him at

Shaws where he has taken root for a quarter of a century and contenting yourself in the meanwhile with a fair provision

I told him I was very willing to be easy and that to carry family concerns before the public was a step from which I was naturally much averse In the meantime (thinking to myself) I began to see the outlines of that scheme on which we afterwards acted

The great affair I asked is to bring home to him the kidnapping

Surely said Mr Rankeillor and if possible out of court For mark you here Mr David we could no doubt find some men of the *Covenant* who would swear to your reclusion but once they were in the box we could no longer check their testimony and some word of your friend Mr Thomson must certainly crop out Which (from what you have let fall) I cannot think to be desirable

Well sir said I here is my way of t And I opened my plot to him

But this would seem to involve my meeting the man Thomson? says he when I had done

I think so indeed sir said I

Dear doctor! cries he rubbing his brow Dear doctor! No Mr David I am afraid your scheme is inadmissible I say nothing against your friend Mr Thomson I know nothing against him and if I did—mark this Mr David!—it would be my duty to lay hands on him Now I put it to you is it wise to meet? He may have matters to his charge He may not have told you all His name may not be even Thomson! cries the lawyer twinkling for some of these fellows will pick up names by the roadside as another would gather haws

You must be the judge sir said I

But it was clear my plan had taken hold upon his fancy for he kept musing to himself till we were called to dinner and the company of Mrs Rankeillor and that lady had scarce left us again to ourselves and a bottle of wine ere he was back harping on my proposal When and where was I to meet my friend Mr Thomson? was I sure of Mr T's discretion? supposing we could catch the old fox tripping would I consent to such and such a term of an agreement?—these and the like questions he kept asking at long intervals while he thought fully rolled his wine upon his tongue When I had answered all of them seemingly to his contentment he fell into a still deeper muse even the claret being now forgotten Then he got a sheet of paper and a pencil and set to work writing and weighing every word and at last touched a bell and had his clerk into the chamber

Torrance said he I must have this written out fair against to night and when it is done you will be so kind as put on your hat and be ready to come along with this gentleman and me for you will probably be wanted as a witness

What sir cried I as soon as the clerk was gone are you to venture it?

Why so it would appear says he filling his glass But let us speak no more of business The very sight of Torrance brings in my head a little droll matter of some years ago when I had made a tryst with the poor oaf at the cross of Edinburgh Each had gone his proper errand and when it came four

o'clock Torrance had been taking a glass and did not know his master and I who had forgot my spectacles was so blind without them that I give you my word I did not know my own clerk And hereupon he laughed heartily

I said it was an odd chance and smiled out of politeness but what held me all the afternoon in wonder he kept returning and dwelling on this story and telling it again with fresh details and laughter so that I began at last to be quite put out of countenance and feel ashamed for my friend's folly

Towards the time I had appointed with Alan we set out from the house Mr Rankeillor and I arm in arm and Torrance following behind with the deed in his pocket and a covered basket in his hand All through the town, the lawyer was bowing right and left and continually being button holed by gentlemen on matters of burgh or private business and I could see he was one greatly looked up to in the country At last we were clear of the houses and began to go along the side of the haven and towards the Hawes Inn and the ferrv pier the scene of my misfortune I could not look upon the place without emotion recalling how many that had been there with me that day were now no more Ransome taken I could hope from the evil to come Shuan passed where I dared not follow him and the poor souls that had gone down with the brig in her last plunge All these and the brig herself I had outlived and come through these hardships and fearful perils without scathe My only thought should have been of gratitude and yet I could not behold the place without sorrow for others and a chill of recollected fear

I was so thinking when upon a sudden Mr Rankeillor cried out clapped his hand to his pockets and began to laugh

Why he cries if this be not a farcical adventure! After all that I said I have forgot my glasses'

At that of course I understood the purpose of his anecdote and knew that if he had left his spectacles at home it had been done on purpose so that he might have the benefit of Alan's help without the awkwardness of recognising him And indeed it was well thought upon for now (suppose things to go the very worst) how could Rankeillor swear to my friend's identity or how be made to bear damaging evidence against myself? For all that he had been a long while finding out his want and had spoken to and recognised a good few persons as we came through the town and I had little doubt myself that ne saw reasonably well

As soon as we were past the Hawes (where I recognised the landlord smoking his pipe in the door and was amazed to see him look no older) Mr Rankeillor changed the order of march walking behind with Torrance and sending me forward in the manner of a scout I went up the hill whistling from time to time my Gaelic air and at length I had the pleasure to hear it answered and to see Alan rise from behind a bush He was somewhat dashed in spirits having passed a long day alone skulking in the country and made but a poor meal in an alehouse near Dundas But at the mere sight of my clothes he began to brighten up and as soon as I had told him in what a forward state our matters were and the part I looked to him to play in what remained he sprang into a new man.

And that is a very good notion of yours says he and I dare to say that you could lay your hands upon no better man to put it through than Alan Breck. It is not a thing (mark ye) that anyone could do but takes a gentleman of penetration. But it sticks in my head your lawyer man will be somewhat wearying to see me says Alan.

Accordingly I cried and waved to Mr Rankeillor who came up alone and was represented to my friend Mr Thomson.

Mr Thomson I am pleased to meet you said he. But I have forgotten my glasses and our friend Mr David here (clapping me on the shoulder) will tell you that I am little better than blind and that you must not be surprised if I pass you by tomorrow.

This he said thinking that Alan would be pleased but the Highlandman's vanity was ready to startle at a less matter than that.

Why sir says he stiffly I would say it mattered the less as we are met here for a particular end to see justice done to Mr Balfour and by what I can see not very likely to have much else in common. But I accept your apology which was a very proper one to make.

And that is more than I could look for Mr Thomson said Rankeillor heartily. And now as you and I are the chief actors in this enterprise I think we should come into a nice agreement to which end I propose that you should lend me your arm for (what with the dusk and the want of my glasses) I am not very clear as to the path and as for you Mr David you will find Torrance a pleasant kind of body to speak with. Only let me remind you it's quite needless he should hear more of your adventures or those of ahem—Mr Thomson.

Accordingly these two went on ahead in very close talk and Torrance and I brought up the rear.

Nig^h was quite come when we came in view of the house of Shaws. Ten had been gone some time it was dark and mild with a pleasant rustling wind in the southwest that covered the sound of our approach and as we drew near we saw no glimmer of light in any portion of the building. It seemed my uncle was already in bed which was indeed the best thing for our arrangements. We made our last whispered consultations some fifty yards away and then the lawyer and Torrance and I crept quietly up and crouched down beside the corner of the house and as soon as we were in our places Alan strode to the door without concealment and began to knock.

XXIX

I COME INTO MY KINGDOM

FOR SOME TIME Alan volleyed upon the door and his knocking only roused the echoes of the house and neighbourhood. At last however I could hear the noise of a window gently thrust up and knew that my uncle had come to his

observatory By what light there was he could see Alan standing like a dark shadow on the steps the three witnesses were hidden quite out of his view so that there was nothing to alarm an honest man in his own house For all that he studied his visitor awhile in silence and when he spoke his voice had a quaver of misgiving

What's this says he This is nae kind of time of night for decent folks and I hae nae troikings* wi night hawks What brings ye here? I have a blunderbush

Is that yousel Mr Balfour? returned Alan stepping back and looking up into the darkness Have a care with that blunderbuss they're nasty things to burst

What brings ye here? and whae are ye says my uncle angrily

I have no manner of inclination to rowt out my name to the country side said Alan but what brings me here is another story being more of your affair than mine and if ye're sure it's what ye would like I'll set it to a tune and sing it to you

And what is it? asked my uncle

David says Alan

"What was that?" cried my uncle in a mighty changed voice

Shall I give ye the rest of the name then? said Alan

There was a pause and then I'm thinking I'll better let ye in says my uncle doubtfully

I daresay that said Alan but the point is Would I go? Now I will tell you what I am thinking I am thinking that it is here upon this doorstep that we must confer upon this business and it shall be here or nowhere at all whatever for I would have you to understand that I am as stiff necked as yoursel and a gentleman of better family

This change of note disconcerted Ebenezer he was a little while digesting it, and then says he Weel weel what must be must and shut the window But it took him a long time to get down stairs and still longer to undo the fastenings repenting (I daresay) and taken with fresh claps of fear at every second step and every bolt and bar At last however we heard the creak of the hinges and it seemed my uncle slipped gingerly out and (seeing that Alan had stepped back a pace or two) sate him down on the top doorstep with the blunderbuss ready in his hands

'And now, says he mind I have my blunderbush and if ye take a step nearer ye're as good as dead

And a very civil speech says Alan 'to be sure'

Na says my uncle but this is no a very chancy kind of a proceeding and I'm bound to be prepared And now that we understand each other ye'll can name your business

Why says Alan you that are a man of so much understanding will doubtless have perceived that I am an Hieland gentleman My name has nae business in my story but the country of my friends is no very far from the Isle of Mull of which ye will have heard It seems there was a ship lost in

*Dealing

those parts and the next day a gentleman of my family was seeking wreck wood for his fire along the sands when he came upon a lad that was half drowned Well he brought him to and he and some other gentlemen took and clapped him in an auld ruined castle where from that day to this he has been a great expense to my friends My friends are a wee wild like and not so particular about the law as some that I could name and finding that the lad owned some decent folk and was your born nephew Mr Balfour they asked me to give ye a bit call, and to confer upon the matter And I may tell ye at the off go unless we can agree upon some terms ye are little likely to set eyes upon him For my friends added Alan, simply are no very well off

My uncle cleared his throat 'I'm no very caring says he He wasnae a good lad at the best of it and I've nae call to interfere

Ay ay said Alan I see what you would be at pretending ye don't care, to make the ransome smaller

Na said my uncle it's the mere truth I take nae manner of interest in the lad and I'll pay nae ransome, and ye can make a kirk and a mill of him for what I care

Hoot sir says Alan Blood's thicker than water in the devil's name! Ye cannae desert your brother's son for the fair shame of it and if ye did and it came to be kennt ye wouldnae be very popular in your countryside or I'm the more deceived

I'm no just very popular the way it is returned Ebenezer and I dinnae see how it would come to be kennt No by me onyway, nor yet by you or your friends So that's idle talk my buckie says he

Then it'll have to be David that tells it said Alan

How's that says my uncle sharply

Ou just this way says Alan My friends would doubtless keep your nephew as long as there was any likelihood of siller to be made of it but if there was nane I am clearly of opinion they would let him gang where he pleased and be damned to him

Av but I'm no very caring about that either said my uncle I wouldnae be muckle made up with that

I was thinking that, said Alan

And what for why? asked Ebenezer

'Why Mr Balfour replied Alan by all that I could hear there were two ways of it either ye liked David and would pay to get him back, or else ye had very good reasons for not wanting him and would pay for us to keep him It seems it's not the first well then it's the second and blithely am I to ken it for it should be a pretty penny in my pocket and the pockets of my friends

I dinnae follow ye there' said my uncle

No? said Alan Well see here you dinnae want the lad back, well, what do you want with him and how much will you pay?

My uncle made no answer but shifted uneasily on his seat

Come sir cried Alan I would have ye to ken that I am a gentleman I bear a king's name I am nae rider to kick my shanks at your hall door

Either give me an answer in civility and that out of hand or by the top of Glencoe I will ram three feet of iron through your vitals

Eh man cried my uncle scrambling to his feet, give me a meenit! What's like wrong with ye? I'm trying to be as ceevil as it's morally possible As for that wild talk it's fair disreputable Vitals says you! And where would I be with my blunderbush? he snarled

Powder and your auld hands are but as the snail to the swallow against the bright steel in the hands of Alan said the other Before your jottering finger could find the trigger the hilt would dirl on your breast bane

Eh man whae's denying it said my uncle Pit it as ye please haet your ain way I'll do naething to cross ye Just tell me what like ye'll be wanting and ye'll see that we'll can agree fine

Troth sir said Alan I ask for nothing but plain dealing In two words do ye want the lad killed or kept?

O sirs! cried Ebenezer O sirs me! that's no kind of language!

Killed or kept? repeated Alan

O keepit! wailed my uncle Well have nae bloodshed if you please,

Well says Alan as ye please that'll be the dearer

The dearer? cries Ebenezer Would ye fyle your hands wi crime

Hoot! said Alan they're baith crime whatever! And the killing's easier and quicker and surer Keeping the lad'll be a fashious* job kittle business

I'll have him keep it though returned my uncle I never had naething to do with onything morally wrong and I'm no gaun to begin to pleasure a wild Hielandman

Ye're unco scrupulous sneered Alan

I'm a man o principle said Ebenezer simply and if I have to pay for it, I'll have to pay for it And besides says he ye forget the lad's my brother's son

Well well said Alan and now about the price It's no very easy for me to set a name upon it I would first have to ken some small matters I would have to ken for instance what ye gave Hoseason at the first off-go

Hoseason! cries my uncle struck aback What for?

For kidnapping David says Alan

It's a lee it's a black lee! cried my uncle He was never kidnapped He leed in his throat that tauld ye that Kidnapped? He never was!

That's no fault of mine nor yet of yours said Alan nor yet of Hoseason's if he's a man that can be trusted

What do ye mean? cried Ebenezer Did Hoseason tell ye?

Why ye donnered auld runt, how else would I ken? cried Alan Hoseason and me are partners we gang shares so ye can see for yoursel what good ye can do leeing And I must plainly say ye drove a fool's bargain when ye let a man like the sailor man so far forward in your private matters But that's past praying for and ye must lie on your bed the way ye made!

And the point in hand is just this what did ye pay him?

Has he tauld ye himself? asked my uncle

*Troublesome

'That's my concern said Alan

Weel said my uncle I dinnae care what he said he leed and the solemn God's truth is this that I gave him twenty pound But I'll be perfectly honest with ye forby that he was to have the selling of the lad in Caroliny whilk would be as muckle mair but no from my pocket ye see

Thank you Mr Thomson That will do excellently well said the lawyer stepping forward and then mighty civilly Good evening Mr Balfour said he

And Good evening uncle Ebenezer said I

And It's a braw nicht Mr Balfour added Torrance

Never a word said my uncle neither black nor white but just sat where he was on the top doorstep and stared upon us like a man turned to stone Alan filched away his blunderbuss and the lawyer taking him by the arm plucked him up from the doorstep led him into the kitchen whither we all followed and set him down in a chair beside the hearth where the fire was out and only a rushlight burning

There we all looked upon him for awhile exulting greatly in our success but yet with a sort of pity for the man's shame

Come come Mr Ebenezer said the lawyer 'you must not be down hearted for I promise you we shall make easy terms In the meanwhile give us the cellar key and Torrance shall draw us a bottle of your father's wine in honour of the event. Then turning to me and taking me by the hand

Mr David says he I wish you all joy in your good fortune which I believe to be deserved And then to Alan with a spicce of drollery Mr Thomson I pay you my compliment it was most artfully conducted but in one point you somewhat outran my comprehension Do I understand your name to be James? or Charles? or is it George perhaps?

And why should it be any of the three sir? quoth Alan drawing himself up like one who smelt an offence

Only sir that you mentioned a king's name replied Rankeillor and as there has never yet been a King Thomson or his fame at least has never come my way I judged you must refer to that you had in baptism

This was just the stab that Alan would feel keenest and I am free to confess he took it very ill. Not a word would he answer but stepped off to the far end of the kitchen and sat down and sulked and it was not till I stepped after him and gave him my hand and thanked him by title as the chief spring of my success that he began to smile a bit and was at last prevailed upon to join our party

By that time we had the fire lighted and a bottle of wine uncorked a good supper came out of the basket to which Torrance and I and Alan set ourselves down while the lawyer and my uncle passed into the next chamber to consult They stayed there closeted about an hour at the end of which period they had come to a good understanding and my uncle and I set our hands to the agreement in a formal manner By the terms of this my uncle bound himself to satisfy Rankeillor as to his intromissions, and to pay me two clear thirds of the yearly income of Shaws

So the beggar in the ballad had come home and when I lay down that night on the kitchen chests I was a man of means and had a name in the country Alan and Torrance and Rankeillor slept and snored on their hard beds but for me who had lain out under heaven and upon dirt and stones so many days and nights and often with an empty belly and in fear of death this good change in my case unmanned me more than any of the former evil ones and I lay till dawn looking at the fire on the roof and planning the future

XXX

Good Bye!

So FAR as I was concerned myself I had come to port but I had still Alan to whom I was much beholden on my hands and I felt besides a heavy charge in the matter of the murder and James of the Glens On both these heads I unbosomed to Rankeillor the next morning walking to and fro about six of the clock before the house of Shaws and with nothing in view but the fields and woods that had been my ancestors and were now mine Even as I spoke on these grave subjects my eye would take a glad bit of a run over the prospect, and my heart jump with pride

About my clear duty to my friend the lawyer had no doubt I must help him out of the county at whatever risk but in the case of James he was of a different mind

Mr Thomson says he is one thing Mr Thomson's kinsman quite another I know little of the facts but I gather that a great noble (whom we will call if you like the D of A)* has some concern and is even supposed to feel some animosity in the matter The D of A is doubtless an excellent nobleman but Mr David *timeo qui nocuere deos* If you interfere to baulk his vengeance you should remember there is one way to shut your testimony out and that is to put you in the dock There you would be in the same pickle as Mr Thomson's kinsman You will object that you are innocent well but so is he And to be tried for your life before a Highland jury on a Highland quarrel and with a Highland judge upon the bench would be a brief transition o the gallows

Now I made all these reasonings before and found no very good reply to them so I put on all the simplicity I could In that case sir said I I would just have to be hanged—would I not?

My dear boy cries he go in God's name and do what you think is right It is a poor thought that at my time of life I should be advising you to choose the safe and shameful and I take it back with an apology Go and do your duty and be hanged if you must, like a gentleman There are worse things in the world than to be hanged

Not many sir said I smiling

Why yes sir he cried very many And it would be ten times better for

*The Duke of Argyll

your uncle (to go no farther afield) if he were dangling decently upon a gibbet

Thereupon he turned in to the house (still in a great fervour of mind, so that I saw I had pleased him heartily) and there he wrote me two letters, making his comments on them as he wrote

This says he is to my bankers the British Linen Company placing a credit to your name Consult Mr Thomson he will know of ways and you with this credit can supply the means I trust you will be a good husband of your money but in the affair of a friend like Mr Thomson I would be even prodigal Then for his kinsman there is no better way than that you should seek the Advocate tell him your tale and offer testimony whether he may take it or not is quite another matter and will turn on the D of A. Now that you may reach the Lord Advocate well recommended I give you here a letter to a namesake of your own the learned Mr Balfour of Pilrig a man whom I esteem It will look better that you should be presented by one of your own name and the laird of Pilrig is much looked up to in the Faculty and stands well with Lord Advocate Grant I would not trouble him, if I were you with any particulars and (do you know?) I think it would be need less to refer to Mr Thomson. Form yourself upon the laird he is a good model when you deal with the Advocate be discreet and in all these matters may the Lord guide you, Mr David!

Thereupon he took his farewell and set out with Torrance for the Ferry, while Alan and I turned our faces for the city of Edinburgh As we went by the foot path and beside the gateposts and the unfinished lodge we kept looking back at the house of my fathers It stood there bare and great and smoke less like a place not lived in only in one of the top windows there was the peak of a nightcap bobbing up and down and back and forward like the head of a rabbit from a burrow I had little welcome when I came and less kindness while I stayed but at least I was watched as I went away

Alan and I went slowly forward upon our way having little heart either to walk or speak The same thought was uppermost in both that we were near the time of our parting the remembrance of all the bygone days sate upon us sorely We talked indeed of what should be done and it was resolved that Alan should keep to the country biding now here now there but coming once in the day to a particular place where I might be able to communicate with him either in my own person or by messenger In the meanwhile I was to seek out a lawyer who was an Appin Stewart and a man therefore to be wholly trusted and it should be his part to find a ship and to arrange for Alan's safe embarkation No sooner was this business done than the words seemed to leave us and though I would seek to jest with Alan under the name of Mr Thomson, and he with me on my new clothes and my estate you could feel very well that we were nearer tears than laughter

We came the by way over the hill of Corstorphine and when we got near to the place called Rest and be Thankful, and looked down on Corstorphine bogs and over to the city and the castle on the hill we both stopped for we both knew without a word said that we had come to where our ways parted.

Here he repeated to me once again what had been agreed upon between us the address of the lawyer the daily hour at which Alan might be found and the signals that were to be made by any that came seeking him Then I gave what money I had (a guinea or two of Rankeillor's) so that he should not starve in the meanwhile and then we stood a space and looked over at Edinburgh in silence

Well good bye said Alan and held out his left hand

Good bye, said I, and gave the hand a little grasp and went off down the hill

Neither one of us looked the other in the face nor so long as he was in my view did I take one back glance at the friend I was leaving But as I went on my way to the city, I felt so lost and lonesome that I could have found it in my heart to sit down by the dyke and cry and weep like any baby

It was coming near noon when I passed in by the West Kirk and the Grassmarket into the streets of the capital The huge height of the buildings, running up to ten and fifteen storeys the narrow arched entries that continually vomited passengers the wares of the merchants in their windows the hubbub and endless stir the foul smells and the fine clothes and a hundred other particulars too small to mention, struck me into a kind of stupor of surprise so that I let the crowd carry me to and fro and yet all the time what I was thinking of was Alan at Rest and-be-Thankful and all the time (although you would think I would not choose but be delighted with these braws and novelties) there was a cold gnawing in my inside like a remorse for something wrong

The hand of Providence brought me in my drifting to the very doors of the British Linen Company's bank

DR JEKYLL AND MR HYDE

The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

I

STORY OF THE DOOR

MR UTTERSON the lawyer was a man of a rugged countenance that was never lighted by a smile cold scanty and embarrassed in discourse backward in sentiment lean long dusty dreary and yet somehow lovable At frierly meetings and when the wine was to his taste something eminently human beaconed from his eye something indeed which never found its way into his talk but which spoke not only in these silent symbols of the after dinner face but more often and loudly in the acts of his life He was austere with himself drank gin when he was alone to mortify a taste for vintage and though he enjoyed the theatre had not crossed the doors of one for twenty years But he had an approved tolerance for others sometimes wondering almost with envy at the high pressure of spirits involved in their misdeeds and in any extremity inclined to help rather than to reprove I incline to Cain's heresy he used to say quaintly I let my brother go to the devil in his own way In this character it was frequently his fortune to be the last reputable acquaintance and the last good influence in the lives of downgoing men And to such as these so long as they came about his chambers he never marked a shade of change in his demeanour

No doubt the feat was easy to Mr Utterson for he was undemonstrative at the best and even his friendships seemed to be founded in a similar catholicity of good nature It is the mark of a modest man to accept his friendly circle ready made from the hands of opportunity and that was the lawyer's way His friends were those of his own blood or those whom he had known the longest his affections like ivy were the growth of time they implied no aptness in the object Hence no doubt the bond that united him to Mr Richard Enfield his distant kinsman the well known man about town It was a nut to crack for many what these two could see in each other or what subject they could find in common It was reported by those who encountered them in their Sunday walks that they said nothing looked singularly dull and would hail with obvious relief the appearance of a friend For all that the two men put the greatest store by these excursions counted them the chief jewel of each week and not only set aside occasions of pleasure but even resisted the calls of business that they might enjoy them uninterrupted

It chanced on one of these rambles that their way led them down a by street in a busy quarter of London The inhabitants were all doing well it seemed and all emulously hoping to do better still and laying out the surplus of their gains in coquetry so that the shop fronts stood along that thoroughfare with an air of invitation like rows of smiling saleswomen Even

on Sunday when it veiled its more florid charms and lay comparatively empty of passage the street shone out in contrast to its dingy neighbourhood like a fire in a forest and with its freshly painted shutters well polished brasses and general cleanliness and gaiety of note instantly caught and pleased the eye of the passenger

Two doors from one corner on the left hand going east, the line was broken by the entry of a court and just at that point a certain sinister block of building thrust forward its gable on the street. It was two storeys high showed no window nothing but a door on the lower storey and a blind forehead of discoloured wall on the upper and bore in every feature the marks of prolonged and sordid negligence The door which was equipped with neither bell nor knocker was blistered and disstained Tramps slouched into the recess and struck matches on the panels children kept shop upon the steps the schoolboy had tried his knife on the mouldings and for close on a generation no one had appeared to drive away these random visitors or to repair their ravages

Mr Enfield and the lawyer were on the other side of the by street but when they came abreast of the entry the former lifted up his cane and pointed

Did you ever remark that door? he asked and when his companion had replied in the affirmative It is connected in my mind added he with a very odd story

'Indeed' said Mr Utterson with a slight change of voice and what was that?

Well it was this way returned Mr Enfield I was coming home from some place at the end of the world about three o'clock of a black winter morning and my way lay through a part of town where there was literally nothing to be seen but lamps Street after street, and all the folks asleep—street after street all lighted up as if for a procession, and all as empty as a church—till at last I got into that state of mind when a man listens and listens and begins to long for the sight of a policeman All at once I saw two figures one a little man who was stumping along eastward at a good walk and the other a girl of maybe eight or ten who was running as hard as she was able down a cross street Well sir the two ran into one another naturally enough at the corner and then came the horrible part of the thing for the man trampled calmly over the child's body and left her screaming on the ground It sounds nothing to hear but it was hellish to see It wasn't like a man it was like some damned Juggernaut I gave a view halloo took to my heels collared my gentleman and brought him back to where there was already quite a group about the screaming child He was perfectly cool and made no resistance but gave me one look so ugly that it brought out the sweat on me like running The people who had turned out were the girl's own family and pretty soon the doctor for whom she had been sent put in his appearance Well the child was not much the worse more frightened according to the Sawbones, and there you might have supposed would be an end to it But there was one curious circumstance I had taken a loathing to my gentleman at first sight So had the child's family which was only natural But the doctor's case was what struck me He was the usual cut and dry

apothecary, of no particular age and colour with a strong Edinburgh accent, and about as emotional as a bagpipe Well sir he was like the rest of us every time he looked at my prisoner I saw that Sawbones turned sick and white with the desire to kill him I knew what was in his mind just as he knew what was in mine and killing being out of the question we did the next best We told the man we could and would make such a scandal out of this as should make his name stink from one end of London to the other If he had any friends or any credit we undertook that he should lose them And all the time as we were pitching it in red hot we were keeping the women off him as best we could for they were as wild as harpies I never saw a circle of such hateful faces and there was the man in the middle with a kind of black, sneering coolness—frightened too I could see that—but carrying it off sir really like Satan If you choose to make capital out of this accident said he I am naturally helpless No gentleman but wishes to avoid a scene says he Name your figure Well we screwed him up to a hundred pounds for the child's family, he would have clearly liked to stick out but there was something about the lot of us that meant mischief and at last he struck The next thing was to get the money and where do you think he carried us but to that place with the door?—whipped out a key went in and presently came back with the matter of ten pounds in gold and a cheque for the balance or Coutts's drawn payable to bearer and signed with a name that I can't mention though it's one of the points of my story but it was a name at least very well known and often printed The figure was stiff but the signature was good for more than that if it was only genuine I took the liberty of pointing out to my gentleman that the whole business looked apocryphal, and that a man does not in real life walk into a cellar door at four in the morning and come out of it with another man's cheque for close upon a hundred pounds But he was quite easy and sneering Set your mind at rest, says he I will stay with you till the banks open and cash the cheque myself So we all set off the doctor and the child's father and our friend and myself and passed the rest of the night in my chambers and next day, when we had breakfasted went in a body to the bank I gave in the cheque myself and said I had every reason to believe it was a forgery Not a bit of it The cheque was genuine

Tut tut! said Mr Utterson

I see you feel as I do said Mr Enfield 'Yes it's a bad story For my man was a fellow that nobody could have to do with a really damnable man, and the person that drew the cheque is the very pink of the proprieties celebrated too, and (what makes it worse) one of your fellows who do what they call good Black mail I suppose, an honest man paying through the nose for some of the capers of his youth Black Mail House is what I call that place with the door in consequence Though even that, you know is far from explaining all he added and with the words fell into a vein of musing

From this he was recalled by Mr Utterson asking rather suddenly And you don't know if the drawer of the cheque lives there?

A likely place isn't it? returned Mr Enfield But I happen to have noticed his address he lives in some square or other

'And you never asked about—the place with the door' said Mr Utterson

'No sir I had a delicacy' was the reply 'I feel very strongly about putting questions it partakes too much of the style of the day of judgment. You start a question and it's like starting a stone. You sit quietly on the top of a hill and away the stone goes starting others and presently some bland old bird (the last you would have thought of) is knocked on the head in his own back garden and the family have to change their name. No sir I make it a rule of mine the more it looks like Queer Street, the less I ask.'

A very good rule too said the lawyer

But I have studied the place for myself continued Mr Enfield. It seems scarcely a house. There is no other door and nobody goes in or out of that one but once in a great while the gentleman of my adventure. There are three windows looking on the court on the first floor none below the windows are always shut but they're clean. And then there is a chimney which is generally smoking so somebody must live there. And yet it's not so sure for the buildings are so packed together about that court, that it's hard to say where one ends and another begins.

The pair walked on again for a while in silence, and then—'Enfield' said Mr Utterson 'that's a good rule of yours'

Yes I think it is returned Enfield

But for all that continued the lawyer there's one point I want to ask I want to ask the name of that man who walked over the child

Well said Mr Enfield I can't see what harm it would do. It was a man of the name of Hyde

Hm said Mr Utterson 'What sort of a man is he to see?'

He is not easy to describe. There is something wrong with his appearance something displeasing something downright detestable. I never saw a man I so disliked and yet I scarce know why. He must be deformed somewhere he gives a strong feeling of deformity although I couldn't specify the point. He's an extraordinary looking man and yet I really can name nothing out of the way. No sir I can make no hand of it I can't describe him. And it's not want of memory for I declare I can see him this moment.

Mr Utterson again walked some way in silence and obviously under a weight of consideration. You are sure he used a key? he inquired at last.

My dear sir began Enfield surprised out of himself

Yes I know said Utterson I know it must seem strange. The fact is if I do not ask you the name of the other party it is because I know it already. You see Richard your tale has gone home. If you have been inexact in any point you had better correct it.

I think you might have warned me returned the other with a touch of sullenness. But I have been pedantically exact as you call it. The fellow had a key and what's more he has it still. I saw him use it not a week ago.

Mr Utterson sighed deeply but said never a word and the young man presently resumed. Here is another lesson to say nothing said he I am ashamed of my long tongue. Let us make a bargain never to refer to this again.

'With all my heart' said the lawyer. I shake hands on that Richard.

II

SEARCH FOR MR HYDE

THAT EVENING Mr Utterson came home to his bachelor house in sombre spirits, and sat down to dinner without relish. It was his custom of a Sunday when this meal was over to sit close by the fire a volume of some dry divinity on his reading desk until the clock of the neighbouring church rang out the hour of twelve when he would go soberly and gratefully to bed. On this night however as soon as the cloth was taken away he took up a candle and went into his business room. There he opened his safe took from the most private part of it a document endorsed on the envelope as Dr Jekyll's Will and sat down with a clouded brow to study its contents. The will was holograph for Mr Utterson though he took charge of it now that it was made had refused to lend the least assistance in the making of it it provided not only that in case of the decease of Henry Jekyll M.D. D.C.L. L.L.D. F.R.S. &c all his possessions were to pass into the hands of his friend and benefactor Edward Hyde but that in case of Dr Jekyll's disappearance or unexplained absence for any period exceeding three calendar months the said Edward Hyde should step into the said Henry Jekyll's shoes without further delay and free from any burthen or obligation beyond the payment of a few small sums to the members of the doctor's household. This document had long been the lawyer's eyesore. It offended him both as a lawyer and as a lover of the sane and customary sides of life to whom the fanciful was the immodest. And hitherto it was his ignorance of Mr Hyde that had swelled his indignation now by a sudden turn it was his knowledge. It was already bad enough when the name was but a name of which he could learn no more. It was worse when it began to be clothed upon with detestable attributes and out of the shifting insubstantial mists that had so long baffled his eye there leaped up the sudden definite presentment of a fiend.

I thought it was madness he said as he replaced the obnoxious paper in the safe and now I begin to fear it is disgrace.

With that he blew out his candle put on a great coat and set forth in the direction of Cavendish Square that citadel of medicine where his friend the great Dr Lanyon had his house and received his crowding patients. If any one knows it will be Lanyon he had thought.

The solemn butler knew and welcomed him he was subjected to no stage of delay but ushered direct from the door to the dining-room where Dr Lanyon sat alone over his wine. This was a hearty healthy dapper red faced gentleman with a shock of hair prematurely white and a boisterous and decided manner. At sight of Mr Utterson he sprang up from his chair and welcomed him with both hands. The geniality as was the way of the man was somewhat theatrical to the eye, but it reposed on genuine feeling. For these two were old friends old mates both at school and college both thorough respecters of

themselves and of each other and what does not always follow men who thoroughly enjoyed each other's company

After a little rambling talk the lawyer led up to the subject which so disagreeably preoccupied his mind

I suppose Lanyon said he you and I must be the two oldest friends that Henry Jekyll has

I wish the friends were younger chuckled Dr Lanyon But I suppose we are And what of that I see little of him now

Indeed said Utterson. I thought you had a bond of common interest

We had was the reply But it is more than ten years since Henry Jekyll became too fanciful for me He began to go wrong wrong in mind and though of course I continue to take an interest in him for old sake's sake as they say I see and I have seen devilish little of the man Such unscientific balderdash added the doctor flushing suddenly purple would have estranged Damon and Pythias

This little spirit of temper was somewhat of a relief to Mr Utterson They have only differed on some point of science he thought and being a man of no scientific passions (except in the matter of conveyancing) he even added

It is nothing worse than that! He gave his friend a few seconds to recover his composure and then approached the question he had come to put

Did you ever come across a *protege* of his—one Hyde? he asked

'Hyde?' repeated Lanyon No Never heard of him Since my time

That was the amount of information that the lawyer carried back with him to the great dark bed on which he tossed to and fro until the small hours of the morning began to grow large It was a night of little ease to his toiling mind toiling in mere darkness and besieged by questions

Six o'clock struck on the bells of the church that was so conveniently near to Mr Utterson's dwelling and still he was digging at the problem Hitherto it had touched him on the intellectual side alone but now his imagination also was engaged or rather enslaved and as he lay and tossed in the gross darkness of the night and the curtained room Mr Enfield's tale went by before his mind in a scroll of lighted pictures He would be aware of the great field of lamps of a nocturnal city then of the figure of a man walking swiftly then of a child running from the doctor's and then these met and that human Jugger-naut trod the child down and passed on regardless of her screams Or else he would see a room in a rich house where his friend lay asleep dreaming and smiling at his dreams and then the door of that room would be opened the curtains of the bed plucked apart, the sleeper recalled and lo! there would stand by his side a figure to whom power was given and even at that dead hour he must rise and do its bidding The figure in these two phases haunted the lawyer all night and if at any time he dozed over it was but to see it glide more stealthily through sleeping houses or move the more swiftly and still the more swiftly even to dizziness through wider labyrinths of lamp lighted city and at every street corner crush a child and leave her screaming And still the figure had no face by which he might know it even in his dreams it had no face or one that baffled him and melted before his eyes and thus it was that

there sprang up and grew apace in the lawyer's mind a singularly strong almost an inordinate curiosity to behold the features of the real Mr Hyde If he could but once set eyes on him he thought the mystery would lighten and perhaps roll altogether away as was the habit of mysterious things when well examined He might see a reason for his friend's strange preference or bondage (call it which you please) and even for the startling clauses of the will And at least it would be a face worth seeing the face of a man who was without bowels of mercy a face which had but to show itself to raise up in the mind of the unimpressionable Enfield a spirit of enduring hatred

From that time forward Mr Utterson began to haunt the door in the by street of shops In the morning before office hours at noon when business was plenty and time scarce at night under the face of the fogged city moon by all lights and at all hours of solitude or concourse the lawyer was to be found on his chosen post

If he be Mr Hyde he had thought I shall be Mr Seek

And at last his patience was rewarded It was a fine dry night frost in the air the streets as clean as a ball room floor the lamps unshaken by any wind drawing a regular pattern of light and shadow By ten o'clock when the shops were closed the by-street was very solitary and in spite of the low growl of London from all round very silent Small sounds carried far domestic sounds out of the houses were clearly audible on either side of the roadway and the rumour of the approach of any passenger preceded him by a long time Mr Utterson had been some minutes at his post when he was aware of an odd light footstep drawing near In the course of his nightly patrols he had long grown accustomed to the quaint effect with which the footfalls of a single person while he is still a great way off suddenly spring out distinct from the vast hum and clatter of the city Yet his attention had never before been so sharply and decisively arrested and it was with a strong superstitious preision of success that he withdrew into the entry of the court

The steps drew swiftly nearer and swelled out suddenly louder as they turned the end of the street The lawyer looking forth from the entry could soon see what manner of man he had to deal with He was small and very plainly dressed and the look of him even at that distance went somehow strongly against the watcher's inclination But he made straight for the door crossing the roadway to save time and as he came he drew a key from his pocket like one approaching home

Mr Utterson stepped out and touched him on the shoulder as he passed Mr Hyde I think?

Mr Hyde shrank back with a hissing intake of the breath But his fear was only momentary and though he did not look the lawyer in the face, he answered coolly enough That is my name What do you want?

I see you are going in returned the lawyer I am an old friend of Dr Jekyll's—Mr Utterson of Gaunt Street—you must have heard my name and meeting you so conveniently I thought you might admit me

You will not find Dr Jekyll, he is from home replied Mr Hyde blowing

in the key And then suddenly but still without looking up How did you know me? he asked

On your side said Mr Utterson will you do me a favour With pleasure replied the other What shall it be? Will you let me see your face? asked the lawyer

Mr Hyde appeared to hesitate and then as if upon some sudden reflection, fronted about with an air of defiance and the pair stared at each other pretty fixedly for a few seconds Now I shall know you again, said Mr Utterson It may be useful

Yes returned Mr Hyde it is as well we have met and *a propos*, you should have my address And he gave a number of a street in Soho

Good God! thought Mr Utterson can he too have been thinking of the will? But he kept his feelings to himself and only grunted in acknowledgment of the address

And now said the other how did you know me?

By description was the reply

Whose description?

We have common friends said Mr Utterson

'Common friends' echoed Mr Hyde a little hoarsely 'Who are they?' Jekyll for instance said the lawyer

He never told you cried Mr Hyde with a flush of anger I did not think you would have lied

Come said Mr Utterson that is not fitting language

The other snarled aloud into a savage laugh and the next moment, with extraordinary quickness he had unlocked the door and disappeared into the house

The lawyer stood awhile when Mr Hyde had left him, the picture of disquietude Then he began slowly to mount the street pausing every step or two and putting his hand to his brow like a man in mental perplexity The problem he was thus debating as he walked was one of a class that is rarely solved Mr Hyde was pale and dwarfish he gave an impression of deformity without any namable malformation he had a displeasing smile he had borne himself to the lawyer with a sort of murderous mixture of timidity and boldness and he spoke with a husky whispering and somewhat broken voice — all these were points against him but not all of these together could explain the hitherto unknown disgust loathing and fear with which Mr Utterson regarded him There must be something else said the perplexed gentleman

There is something more if I could find a name for it God bless me the man seems hardly human! Something troglodytic shall we say? or can it be the old story of Dr Fell? or is it the mere radiance of a foul soul that thus transpires through and transfigures its clay continent? The last, I think for O my poor old Harry Jekyll if ever I read Satan's signature upon a face it is on that of your new friend

Round the corner from the by-street there was a square of ancient, handsome houses now for the most part decayed from their high estate and 'let in flats and chambers, to all sorts and conditions of men map-engravers, archi

tects shady lawyers and the agents of obscure enterprises One house however second from the corner was still occupied entire and at the door of this which wore a great air of wealth and comfort though it was now plunged in darkness except for the fan-light Mr Utterson stopped and knocked A well dressed elderly servant opened the door

‘Is Dr Jekyll at home Poole?’ asked the lawyer

‘I will see Mr Utterson’ said Poole admitting the visitor as he spoke into a large low roofed comfortable hall paved with flags warmed (after the fashion of a country house) by a bright open fire and furnished with costly cabinets of oak Will you wait here by the fire sir? or shall I give you a light in the dining room?

Here thank you said the lawyer and he drew near and leaned on the tall fender This hall in which he was now left alone was a pet fancy of his friend the doctor’s and Utterson himself was wont to speak of it as the pleasantest room in London But to night there was a shudder in his blood the face of Hyde sat heavy on his memory he felt (what was rare with him) a nausea and distaste of life and in the gloom of his spirits he seemed to read a menace in the flickering of the firelight on the polished cabinets and the uneasy starting of the shadow on the roof He was ashamed of his belief when Poole presently returned to announce that Dr Jekyll was gone out

I saw Mr Hyde go in by the old dissecting-room door Poole he said Is that right when Dr Jekyll is from home?

‘Quite right Mr Utterson sir’ replied the servant. Mr Hyde has a key

Your master seems to repose a great deal of trust in that young man Poole resumed the other musingly

Yes sir he do indeed said Poole We have all orders to obey him.

I do not think I ever met Mr Hyde?’ asked Utterson

O dear no sir He never *dines* here replied the butler Indeed we see very little of him on this side of the house he mostly comes and goes by the laboratory

Well good night Poole

“Good night Mr Utterson”

And the lawyer set out homeward with a very heavy heart. Poor Harry Jekyll he thought my mind misgives me he is in deep waters! He was wild when he was young a long while ago to be sure but in the law of God there is no statute of limitations Ah it must be that the ghost of some old sin, the cancer of some concealed disgrace punishment coming *pede cludo*, years after memory has forgotten and self love condoned the fault And the lawyer scared by the thought brooded awhile on his own past, groping in all the corners of memory lest by chance some Jack in the Box of an old iniquity should leap to light there His past was fairly blameless few men could read the rolls of their life with less apprehension yet he was humbled to the dust by the many ill things he had done and raised up again into a sober and fearful gratitude by the many that he had come so near to doing yet avoided And then by a return on his former subject he conceived a spark of hope This Master Hyde if he were studied thought he, must have secrets of his own

lack secrets by the look of him secrets compared to which poor Jekyll's worst would be like sunshine. Things cannot continue as they are. It turns me cold to think of this creature stealing like a thief to Harry's bedside poor Harry what a wakening! And the danger of it for if this Hyde suspects the existence of the will he may grow impudent to inherit. Ah I must put my shoulder to the wheel—if Jekyll will but let me he added if Jekyll will only let me. For once more he saw before his mind's eye as clean as a transparency the strange clauses of the will.

III

DR JEKYLL WAS QUITE AT EASE

A FORTNIGHT LATER by excellent good fortune the doctor gave one of his pleasant dinners to some five or six old cronies all intelligent reputable men and all judges of good wine and Mr Utterson so contrived that he remained behind after the others had departed. This was no new arrangement but a thing that had befallen many scores of times. Where Utterson was liked he was liked well. Hosts loved to detain the dry lawyer when the light-hearted and the loose tongued had already their foot on the threshold they liked to sit awhile in his unobtrusive company practising for solitude sobering their minds in the man's rich silence after the expense and strain of gaiety. To this rule Dr Jekyll was no exception and as he now sat on the opposite side of the fire—a large well made smooth faced man of fifty with something of a slyish cast perhaps but every mark of capacity and kindness—you could see by his looks that he cherished for Mr Utterson a sincere and warm affection.

I have been wanting to speak to you Jekyll began the latter. You know that will of yours?

A close observer might have gathered that the topic was distasteful but the doctor carried it off gaily. My poor Utterson said he you are unfortunate in such a client I never saw a man so distressed as you were by my will unless it were that hide-bound pedant Lanyon at what he called my scientific heresies. O I know he's a good fellow—you needn't frown—an excellent fellow and I always mean to see more of him but a hide bound pedant for all that an ignorant blatant pedant I was never more disappointed in any man than Lanyon.

You know I never approved of it pursued Utterson ruthlessly disregarding the fresh topic.

My will Yes certainly I know that said the doctor a trifle sharply. You have told me so.

Well I tell you so again, continued the lawyer I have been learning something of young Hyde.

The large handsome face of Dr Jekyll grew pale to the very lips and there came a blackness about his eyes I do not care to hear more said he. This is a matter I thought we had agreed to drop.

"What I heard was abominable said Utterson

'It can make no change You do not understand my position, returned the doctor with a certain incoherency of manner I am painfully situated Utterson my position is a very strange—a very strange one It is one of those affairs that cannot be mended by talking

Jekyll said Utterson you know me I am a man to be trusted Make a clean breast of this in confidence and I make no doubt I can get you out of it.

My good Utterson said the doctor this is very good of you this is downright good of you and I cannot find words to thank you in I believe you fully I would trust you before any man alive ay before myself if I could make the choice but indeed it isn't what you fancy, it is not so bad as that and just to put your good heart at rest I will tell you one thing the moment I choose I can be rid of Mr Hyde I give you my hand upon that and I thank you again and again, and I will just add one little word Utterson that I'm sure you'll take in good part this is a private matter, and I beg of you to let it sleep

Utterson reflected a little looking in the fire

I have no doubt you are perfectly right he said at last, getting to his feet 'Well but since we have touched upon this business and for the last time I hope continued the doctor 'there is one point I should like you to understand I have really a very great interest in poor Hyde I know you have seen him he told me so and I fear he was rude But I do sincerely take a great a very great interest in that young man and if I am taken away Utterson I wish you to promise me that you will bear with him and get his rights for him I think you would if you knew all, and it would be a weight off my mind if you would promise

I can't pretend that I shall ever like him' said the lawyer

I don't ask that pleaded Jekyll laying his hand upon the other's arm I only ask for justice I only ask you to help him for my sake when I am no longer here

Utterson heaved an irrepressible sigh 'Well said he I promise'

IV

THE CAREW MURDER CASE

NEARLY A YEAR LATER in the month of October 18— London was startled by a crime of singular ferocity and rendered all the more notable by the high position of the victim The details were few and startling A maid servant living alone in a house not far from the river had gone upstairs to bed about eleven Although a fog rolled over the city in the small hours the early part of the night was cloudless and the lane which the maid's window overlooked, was brilliantly lit by the full moon It seems she was romantically given for she sat down upon her box which stood immediately under the window and fell

into a dream of musing Never (she used to say with streaming tears when she narrated that experience) never had she felt more at peace with all men or thought more kindly of the world And as she so sat she became aware of an aged and beautiful gentleman with white hair drawing near along the lane and advancing to meet him another and very small gentleman, to whom at first she paid less attention. When they had come within speech (which was just under the maid's eyes) the older man bowed and accosted the other with a very pretty manner of politeness It did not seem as if the subject of his address were of great importance indeed from his pointing it sometimes appeared as if he were only inquiring his way but the moon shone on his face as he spoke and the girl was pleased to watch it, it seemed to breathe such an innocent and old world kindness of disposition yet with something high too as of a well founded self content Presently her eye wandered to the other and she was surprised to recognise in him a certain Mr Hyde who had once visited her master and for whom she had conceived a dislike He had in his hand a heavy cane with which he was trifling but he answered never a word and seemed to listen with an ill contained impatience And then all of a sudden he broke out in a great flame of anger stamping with his foot brandishing the cane and carrying on (as the maid described it) like a madman The old gentleman took a step back, with the air of one very much surprised and a trifle hurt and at that Mr Hyde broke out of all bounds and clubbed him to the earth And the next moment with ape like fury he was trampling his victim under foot and hurling down a storm of blows under which the bones were audibly shattered and the body jumped upon the roadway At the horror of these sights and sounds the maid fainted

It was two o'clock when she came to herself and called for the police The murderer was gone long ago but there lay his victim in the middle of the lane incredibly mangled The stick with which the deed had been done although it was of some rare and very tough and heavy wood had broken in the middle under the stress of this insensate cruelty and one splintered half had rolled in the neighbouring gutter—the other without doubt, had been carried away by the murderer A purse and a gold watch were found upon the victim but no cards or papers except a sealed and stamped envelope which he had been probably carrying to the post and which bore the name and address of Mr Utterson

This was brought to the lawyer the next morning before he was out of bed and he had no sooner seen it and been told the circumstances than he shot out a solemn lip I shall say nothing till I have seen the body said he 'this may be very serious Have the kindness to wait while I dress And with the same grave countenance he hurried through his breakfast and drove to the police station whither the body had been carried As soon as he came into the cell he nodded

Yes said he I recognise him I am sorry to say that this is Sir Danvers Carew

Good God sir exclaimed the officer is it possible? And the next moment his eye lighted up with professional ambition This will make a deal of

noise he said And perhaps you can help us to the man And he briefly narrated what the maid had seen and showed the broken stick

Mr Utterson had already quailed at the name of Hyde but when the stick was laid before him he could doubt no longer broken and battered as it was he recognised it for one that he had himself presented many years before to Henry Jekyll

Is this Mr Hyde a person of small stature? he inquired

Particularly small and particularly wicked looking is what the maid calls him said the officer

Mr Utterson reflected and then raising his head If you will come with me in my cab he said I think I can take you to his house

It was by this time about nine in the morning and the first fog of the season. A great chocolate coloured pall lowered over heaven but the wind was continually charging and routing these embattled vapours so that as the cab crawled from street to street, Mr Utterson beheld a marvellous number of degrees and hues of twilight for here it would be dark like the back end of evening and there would be a glow of a rich lurid brown like the light of some strange conflagration and here for a moment the fog would be quite broken up and a haggard shaft of daylight would glance in between the swirling wreaths The dismal quarter of Soho seen under these changing glumppes with its muddy ways and slatternly passengers and its lamps which had never been extinguished or had been kindled afresh to combat this mournful invasion of darkness seemed in the lawyer's eyes like a district of some city in a nightmare The thoughts of his mind besides were of the gloomiest dye and when he glanced at the companion of his drive he was conscious of some touch of that terror of the law and the law's officers which may at times assail the most honest

As the cab drew up before the address indicated the fog lifted a little and showed him a dingy street a gin palace a low French eating house a shop for the retail of penny numbers and two penny salads many ragged children bundled in the doorways and many women of many different nationalities passing out key in hand to have a morning glass and the next moment the fog settled down again up that part as brown as umber and cut him off from his blackguardly surroundings This was the home of Jekyll's favourite of a man who was heir to a quarter of a million sterling

An ivory faced and silvery haired old woman opened the door She had an evil face smoothed by hypocrisy but her manners were excellent Yes she said this was Mr Hyde's but he was not at home he had been in that night very late but had gone away again in less than an hour there was nothing strange in that his habits were very irregular and he was often absent for instance it was nearly two months since she had seen him till yesterday

Very well then we wish to see his rooms said the lawyer and when the woman began to declare it was impossible I had better tell you who this person is he added This is Inspector Newcomen of Scotland Yard

A flash of odious joy appeared upon the woman's face Ah! said she he is in trouble! What has he done?

Mr Utterson and the inspector exchanged glances. He don't see a very popular character observed the latter. And now my good woman just let me and this gentleman have a look about us.

In the whole extent of the house which but for the old woman remained otherwise empty Mr Hyde had only used a couple of rooms but these were furnished with luxury and good taste. A closet was filled with wine the plate was of silver the napery elegant a good picture hung upon the walls a gift (as Utterson supposed) from Henri Jekyll who was much of a connoisseur and the carpets were of many piles and agreeable in colour. At this moment however the rooms bore every mark of having been recently and hurriedly ransacked clothes lay about the floor with their pockets inside out lockfast drawers stood open and on the hearth there lay a pile of gray ashes as though many papers had been burned. From these embers the inspector disinterred the butt end of a green cheque book which had resisted the action of the fire the other half of the stick was found behind the door and as this clinched his suspicions the officer declared himself delighted. A visit to the bank where several thousand pounds were found to be lying to the murderer's credit, completed his gratification.

You may depend upon it sir he told Mr Utterson I have him in my hand. He must have lost his head or he never would have left the stick or above all burned the cheque book. Why money's life to a man. We have nothing to do but wait for him at the bank and get out the handbills.

This last however was not so easy of accomplishment for Mr Hyde had numbered few familiars—even the master of the servant maid had only seen him twice his family could nowhere be traced he had never been photographed and the few who could describe him differed widely as common observers will. Only on one point were they agreed and that was the haunting sense of unexpressed deformity with which the fugitive impressed his beholders.

V

INCIDENT OF THE LETTER

IT WAS LATE in the afternoon when Mr Utterson found his way to Dr Jekyll's door where he was at once admitted by Poole and carried down by the kitchen offices and across a yard which had once been a garden to the building which was indifferently known as the laboratory or the dissecting rooms. The doctor had bought the house from the heirs of a celebrated surgeon and his own tastes being rather chemical than anatomical had changed the destination of the block at the bottom of the garden. It was the first time that the lawyer had been received in that part of his friend's quarters and he eyed the dingy windowless structure with curiosity and gazed round with a distasteful sense of strangeness as he crossed the theatre once crowded with eager students and now lying gaunt and silent the tables laden with chemical apparatus the floor strewn with crates and littered with packing straw and the light falling

dimly through the foggy cupola. At the further end a flight of stairs mounted to a door covered with red baize and through this Mr Utterson was at last received into the doctor's cabinet. It was a large room fitted round with glass presses furnished among other things with a cheval glass and a business table and looking out upon the court by three dusty windows barred with iron. The fire burned in the grate a lamp was set lighted on the chimney shelf for even in the houses the fog began to lie thickly and there close up to the warmth sat Dr Jekyll looking deadly sick. He did not rise to meet his visitor but held out a cold hand and bade him welcome in a changed voice.

And now, said Mr Utterson as soon as Poole had left them you have heard the news?

The doctor shuddered. They were crying it in the square he said I heard them in my dining room'

One word, said the lawyer Carew was my client but so are you and I want to know what I am doing. You have not been mad enough to hide this fellow?

Utterson I swear to God cried the doctor I swear to God I will never set eyes on him again. I bind my honour to you that I am done with him in this world. It is all at an end. And indeed he does not want my help you do not know him as I do he is safe he is quite safe mark my words, he will never more be heard of.

The lawyer listened gloomily he did not like his friend's feverish manner. You seem pretty sure of him said he, and for your sake I hope you may be right. If it came to a trial your name might appear.

I am quite sure of him replied Jekyll, I have grounds for certainty that I cannot share with any one. But there is one thing on which you may advise me I have—I have received a letter and I am at a loss whether I should show it to the police. I should like to leave it in your hands. Utterson you would judge wisely I am sure, I have so great a trust in you.

You fear I suppose that it might lead to his detection? asked the lawyer.

'No' said the other I cannot say that I care what becomes of Hyde, I am quite done with him. I was thinking of my own character which this hateful business has rather exposed.

Utterson ruminated awhile he was surprised at his friend's selfishness and yet relieved by it. Well said he at last let me see the letter.

The letter was written in an old upright hand and signed Edward Hyde and it signified briefly enough that the writer's benefactor Dr Jekyll whom he had long so unworthily repaid for a thousand generosities need labour under no alarm for his safety as he had means of escape on which he placed a sure dependence. The lawyer liked this letter well enough it put a better colour on the intimacy than he had looked for and he blamed himself for some of his past suspicions.

Have you the envelope? he asked.

I burned it, replied Jekyll before I thought what I was about. But it bore no postmark. The note was handed in.

Shall I keep this and sleep upon it? asked Utterson.

I wish you to judge for me entirely was the reply I have lost confidence in myself

Well I shall consider returned the lawyer And now one word more it was Hyde who dictated the terms in your will about that disappearance?

The doctor seemed seized with a qualm of faintness he shut his mouth tight and nodded

I knew it said Utterson He meant to murder you You have had a fine escape

I have had what is far more to the purpose returned the doctor solemnly I have had a lesson—O God Utterson what a lesson I have had! And he covered his face for a moment with his hands

On his way out the lawyer stopped and had a word or two with Poole By the by said he there was a letter handed in to-day what was the messenger like? But Poole was positive nothing had come except by post and only circulars by that he added

This news sent off the visitor with his fears renewed Plainly the letter had come by the laboratory door possibly indeed it had been written in the cabinet and if that were so it must be differently judged and handled with the more caution The news-boys as he went were crying themselves hoarse along the footways Special edition Shocking murder of an M P That was the funeral oration of one friend and client and he could not help a certain apprehension lest the good name of another should be sucked down in the eddy of the scandal It was at least, a ticklish decision that he had to make and self reliant as he was by habit he began to cherish a longing for advice It was not to be had directly but perhaps he thought it might be fished for

Presently after he sat on one side of his own hearth with Mr Guest his head clerk upon the other and midway between at a nicely calculated distance from the fire a bottle of a particular old wine that had long dwelt unsunned in the foundations of his house The fog still slept on the wing above the drowned city where the lamps glimmered like carbuncles and through the muffle and smother of these fallen clouds the procession of the town's life was still rolling in through the great arteries with a sound as of a mighty wind But the room was gay with firelight In the bottle the acids were long ago resolved the imperial dye had softened with time as the colour grows richer in stained windows and the glow of hot autumn afternoons on hillside vine yards was ready to be set free and to dispel the fogs of London Insensibly the lawyer melted There was no man from whom he kept fewer secrets than Mr Guest and he was not always sure that he kept as many as he meant Guest had often been on business to the doctor's he knew Poole he could scarce have failed to hear of Mr Hyde's familiarity about the house he might draw conclusions was it not as well then that he should see a letter which put that mystery to rights? and above all since Guest being a great student and critic of handwriting would consider the step natural and obliging? The clerk, besides was a man of counsel he would scarce read so strange a document without dropping a remark, and by that remark Mr Utterson might shape his future course

This is a sad business about Sir Danvers he said

Yes sir indeed It has elicited a great deal of public feeling' returned Guest The man of course was mad

I should like to hear your views on that replied Utterson I have a document here in his handwriting it is between ourselves for I scarce know what to do about it it's an ugly business at the best But there it is quite in your way a murderer's autograph

Guest's eyes brightened and he sat down at once and studied it with passion No sir he said not mad but it is an odd hand

And by all accounts a very odd writer added the lawyer

Just then the servant entered with a note

Is that from Dr Jekyll sir? inquired the clerk I thought I knew the writing Anything private Mr Utterson?

Only an invitation to dinner Why? Do you want to see it?

One moment I thank you sir and the clerk laid the two sheets of paper alongside and sedulously compared their contents Thank you sir he said at last returning both it's a very interesting autograph

There was a pause during which Mr Utterson struggled with himself Why did you compare them, Guest? he inquired suddenly

Well sir returned the clerk there's a rather singular resemblance the two hands are in many points identical only differently sloped

Rather quaint said Utterson

'It is as you say rather quaint returned Guest

'I wouldn't speak of this note said the master

No sir said the clerk I understand

But no sooner was Mr Utterson alone that night than he locked the note into his safe where it reposed from that time forward What! he thought

Henry Jekyll forge for a murderer! And his blood ran cold in his veins

VI

REMARKABLE INCIDENT OF DR LANYON

TIME RAN ON thousands of pounds were offered in reward for the death of Sir Danvers was resented as a public injury but Mr Hyde had disappeared out of the ken of the police as though he had never existed Much of his past was unearthed indeed and all disreputable tales came out of the man's cruelty at once so callous and violent of his vile life of his strange associates, of the hatred that seemed to have surrounded his career but of his present whereabouts not a whisper From the time he had left the house in Soho on the morning of the murder he was simply blotted out and gradually as time drew on Mr Utterson began to recover from the hotness of his alarm and to grow more quiet with himself The death of Sir Danvers was to his way of thinking more than paid for by the disappearance of Mr Hyde Now that the evil influence had been withdrawn a new life began for Dr Jekyll He came

out of his seclusion renewed relations with his friends became once more their familiar guest and entertainer and whilst he had always been known for charities he was now no less distinguished for his religion He was bus he was much in the open air he did good his face seemed to open and brighten, as if with an inward consciousness of service and for more than two months the doctor was at peace

On the 8th of January Utterson had dined at the doctor's with a small party Lanyon had been there and the face of the host had looked from one to the other as in the old days when the trio were inseparable friends On the 12th and again on the 14th the door was shut against the lawyer The doctor was confined to the house Poole said and saw no one On the 15th he tried again and was again refused and having now been used for the last two months to see his friend almost daily he found this return of solitude to weigh upon his spirits The fifth night he had in Guest to dine with him and the sixth he betook himself to Dr Lanyon's

There at least he was not denied admittance but when he came in he was shocked at the change which had taken place in the doctor's appearance He had his death warrant written legibly upon his face The rosy man had grown pale, his flesh had fallen away he was visibly bolder and older and yet it was not so much these tokens of a swift physical decay that arrested the lawyer's notice as a look in the eye and quality of manner that seemed to testify to some deep seated terror of the mind It was unlikely that the doctor should fear death and yet that was what Utterson was tempted to suspect Yes he thought he is a doctor he must know his own state and that his days are counted and the knowledge is more than he can bear And yet when Utterson remarked on his ill looks it was with an air of great firmness that Lanyon declared himself a doomed man

I have had a great shock he said and I shall never recover It is a question of weeks Well life has been pleasant I liked it yes sir I used to like it I sometimes think if we knew all we should be more glad to get away

Jekyll is ill too observed Utterson Have you seen him?

But Lanyon's face changed and he held up a trembling hand I wish to see or hear no more of Dr Jekyll he said in a loud unsteady voice I am quite done with that person and I beg that you will spare me any allusion to one whom I regard as dead

Tut tut! said Mr Utterson and then after a considerable pause Can't I do anything? he inquired We are three very old friends Lanyon we shall not live to make others

Nothing can be done returned Lanyon ask himself

He will not see me said the lawyer

I am not surprised at that, was the reply Some day Utterson after I am dead you may perhaps come to learn the right and wrong of this I cannot tell you And in the meantime if you can sit and talk with me of other things for God's sake stay and do so but if you cannot keep clear of this accursed topic then in God's name go for I cannot bear it

As soon as he got home Utterson sat down and wrote to Jekyll complaining

of his exclusion from the house and asking the cause of this unhappy break with Lanyon and the next day brought him a long answer often very pathetically worded and sometimes darkly mysterious in drift The quarrel with Lanyon was incurable I do not blame our old friend Jekyll wrote but I share his view that we must never meet I mean from henceforth to lead a life of extreme seclusion you must not be surprised nor must you doubt my friendship if my door is often shut even to you You must suffer me to go my own dark way I have brought on myself a punishment and a danger that I cannot name If I am the chief of sinners I am the chief of sufferers also I could not think that this earth contained a place for sufferings and terrors so unmanning and you can do but one thing Utterson to lighten this destiny and that is to respect my silence Utterson was amazed the dark influence of Hyde had been withdrawn the doctor had returned to his old tasks and amities a week ago the prospect had smiled with every promise of a cheerful and an honoured age and now in a moment friendship and peace of mind and the whole tenor of his life were wrecked So great and unprepared a change pointed to madness but in view of Lanyon's manner and words there must lie for it some deeper ground

A week afterwards Dr Lanyon took to his bed and in something less than a fortnight he was dead The night after the funeral, at which he had been sadly affected Utterson locked the door of his business room and sitting there by the light of a melancholy candle drew out and set before him an envelope addressed by the hand and sealed with the seal of his dead friend PRIVATE for the hands of J G UTTERSON ALONE, and in case of his predecease to be destroyed unread, so it was emphatically superscribed, and the lawyer dreaded to behold the contents I have buried one friend today he thought what if this should cost me another? And then he condemned the fear as a disloyalty and broke the seal Within there was another enclosure likewise sealed, and marked upon the cover as not to be opened till the death or disappearance of Dr Henry Jekyll Utterson could not trust his eyes Yes it was disappearance here again, as in the mad will which he had long ago restored to its author here again were the idea of a disappearance and the name of Henry Jekyll bracketed But in the will that idea had sprung from the sinister suggestion of the man Hyde it was set there with a purpose all too plain and horrible Written by the hand of Lanyon, what should it mean? A great curiosity came to the trustee to disregard the prohibition and dive at once to the bottom of these mysteries but professional honour and faith to his dead friend were stringent obligations and the packet slept in the inmost corner of his private safe

It is one thing to mortify curiosity another to conquer it and it may be doubted if from that day forth Utterson desired the society of his surviving friend with the same eagerness He thought of him kindly, but his thoughts were disquieted and fearful He went to call indeed but he was perhaps relieved to be denied admittance perhaps in his heart he preferred to speak with Poole upon the doorstep and surrounded by the air and sounds of the open city rather than to be admitted into that house of voluntary bondage and to sit and

speak with its in crutable recluse Poole had indeed no very pleasant news to communicate The doctor it appeared now more than ever confined himself to the cabinet over the laboratory where he would sometimes even sleep he was out of spirits he had grown very silent, he did not read it seemed as if he had something on his mind Utterson became so used to the unvarying character of these reports, that he fell off little by little in the frequency of his visits

VII

INCIDENT AT THE WINDOW

IT CHANCED on Sunday when Mr Utterson was on his usual walk with Mr Enfield that their way lay once again through the by street and that when they came in front of the door both stopped to gaze on it

Well said Enfield that story's at an end at least We shall never see more of Mr Hyde

I hope not said Utterson Did I ever tell you that I once saw him and shared your feeling of repulsion?

It was impossible to do the one without the other returned Enfield And by the way what an ass you must have thought me not to know that this was a back way to Dr Jekyll's! It was partly your own fault that I found it out, even when I did

So you found it out, did you? said Utterson But if that be so we may step into the court and take a look at the windows To tell you the truth I am uneasy about poor Jekyll and even outside I feel as if the presence of a friend might do him good

The court was very cool and a little damp and full of premature twilight, although the sky high up overhead was still bright with sunset The middle one of the three windows was half way open and sitting close beside it taking the air with an infinite sadness of mien like some disconsolate prisoner Utterson saw Dr Jekyll

What! Jekyll! he cried I trust you are better'

I am very low Utterson replied the doctor drearily very low It will not last long thank God

You stay too much indoors said the lawyer You should be out whipping up the circulation like Mr Enfield and me (This is my cousin—Mr Enfield—Dr Jekyll) Come now get your hat and take a quick turn with us

You are very good sighed the other I should like to very much but no no no it is quite impossible I dare not But indeed Utterson I am very glad to see you this is really a great pleasure I would ask you and Mr Enfield up, but the place is really not fit

Why then said the lawyer good naturally the best thing we can do is to stay down here and speak with you from where we are

That is just what I was about to propose returned the doctor with a smile But the words were hardly uttered before the smile was struck out of his face

and succeeded by an expression of such abject terror and despair as froze the very blood of the two gentlemen below. They saw it but for a glimpse for the window was instantly thrust down, but that glimpse had been sufficient and they turned and left the court without a word. In silence too they traversed the by street and it was not until they had come into a neighbouring thorough fare where even upon a Sunday there were still some stirrings of life that Mr Utterson at last turned and looked at his companion. They were both pale and there was an answering horror in their eyes.

God forgive us! God forgive us! said Mr Utterson.

But Mr Enfield only nodded his head very seriously, and walked on once more in silence.

VIII

THE LAST NIGHT

MR UTTERSON was sitting by his fireside one evening after dinner, when he was surprised to receive a visit from Poole.

Bless me Poole what brings you here? he cried and then taking a second look at him. What ails you? he added. Is the doctor ill?

Mr Utterson said the man there is something wrong.

Take a seat and here is a glass of wine for you said the lawyer. Now take your time and tell me plainly what you want.

You know the doctor's ways sir replied Poole and how he shuts himself up. Well he's shut up again in the cabinet and I don't like it sir—I wish I may die if I like it Mr Utterson sir I'm afraid.

Now my good man said the lawyer be explicit. What are you afraid of?

"I've been afraid for about a week" returned Poole doggedly disregarding the question and I can bear it no more.

The man's appearance amply bore out his words his manner was altered for the worse and except for the moment when he had first announced his terror he had not once looked the lawyer in the face. Even now he sat with the glass of wine untasted on his knee and his eyes directed to a corner of the floor. I can bear it no more he repeated.

Come said the lawyer, I see you have some good reason, Poole I see there is something seriously amiss. Try to tell me what it is.

I think there's been foul play said Poole hoarsely.

Foul play! cried the lawyer a good deal frightened and rather inclined to be irritated in consequence. What foul play? What does the man mean?

I daren't say sir was the answer but will you come along with me and see for yourself?

Mr Utterson's only answer was to rise and get his hat and great coat but he observed with wonder the greatness of the relief that appeared upon the butler's face and perhaps with no less that the wine was still untasted when he set it down to follow.

It was a wild cold unseasonable night of March with a pale moon living on her back as though the wind had tilted her and a flying wrack of the most diaphanous and lawny texture The wind made talking difficult and flecked the blood into the face It seemed to have swept the streets unusually bare of passengers besides for Mr Utterson thought he had never seen that part of London so deserted He could have wished it otherwise never in his life had he been conscious of so sharp a wish to see and touch his fellow creatures for struggle as he might there was borne in upon his mind a crushing anticipation of calamity The square when they got there was all full of wind and dust, and the thin trees in the garden were slashing themselves along the railing Poole who had kept all the way a pace or two ahead now pulled up in the middle of the pavement and in spite of the biting weather took off his hat and mopped his brow with a red pocket handkerchief But for all the hurry of his coming these were not the dews of exertion that he wiped away but the moisture of some strangling anguish for his face was white and his voice when he spoke harsh and broken

Well sir he said here we are and God grant there be nothing wrong

Amen Poole said the lawyer

Thereupon the servant knocked in a very guarded manner the door was opened on the chain, and a voice asked from within Is that you Poole?

It's all right said Poole Open the door

The hall when they entered it was brightly lighted up the fire was built high, and about the hearth the whole of the servants men and women stood huddled together like a flock of sheep At the sight of Mr Utterson the house maid broke into hysterical whimpering and the cook crying out Bless God! it's Mr Utterson, ran forward as if to take him in her arms

What what? Are you all here? said the lawyer peevishly Very irregular, very unseemly your master would be far from pleased

They're all afraid said Poole

Blank silence followed no one protesting only the maid lifted up her voice and now wept loudly

Hold your tongue! Poole said to her with a ferocity of accent that testified to his own jangled nerves and indeed when the girl had so suddenly raised the note of her lamentation they had all started and turned towards the inner door with faces of dreadful expression And now continued the butler addressing the knife boy reach me a candle and we'll get this through hands at once And then he begged Mr Utterson to follow him and led the way to the back garden

Now sir said he 'you come as gently as you can I want you to hear and I don't want to be heard And see here sir, if by any chance he was to ask you in don't go

Mr Utterson's nerves at this unlooked for termination gave a jerk that nearly threw him from his balance but he re-collected his courage and followed the butler into the laboratory building and through the surgical theatre with its lumber of crates and bottles to the foot of the stair Here Poole motioned him to stand on one side and listen while he himself setting down the

candle and making a great and obvious call on his resolution mounted the steps and knocked with a somewhat uncertain hand on the red baize of the cabinet door

Mr Utterson sir asking to see you ' he called and even as he did so once more violently signed to the lawyer to give ear

A voice answered from within Tell him ' cannot see any one ' it said complainingly

Thank you sir said Poole with a note of something like triumph in his voice and taking up his candle he led Mr Utterson back across the yard and into the great kitchen where the fire was out and the beetles were leaping on the floor

Sir he said, looking Mr Utterson in the eyes was that my master's voice?

It seems much changed' replied the lawyer, very pale, but giving look for look

Changed? Well, yes I think so," said the butler Have I been twenty years in this man's house to be deceived about his voice? No sir master's made away with he was made away with, eight days ago when we heard him cry out upon the name of God and who's in there instead of him and why it stays there is a thing that cries to Heaven Mr Utterson!

This is a very strange tale Poole this is rather a wild tale my man said Mr Utterson biting his finger Suppose it were as you suppose supposing Dr Jekyll to have been—well, murdered what could induce the murderer to stay? That won't hold water it doesn't commend itself to reason

Well Mr Utterson you are a hard man to satisfy but I'll do it yet said Poole All this last week (you must know) him or it or whatever it is that lives in that cabinet, has been crying night and day for some sort of medicine and cannot get it to his mind It was sometimes his way—the master's that is—to write his orders on a sheet of paper and throw it on the stair We've had nothing else this week back nothing but papers and a closed door and the very meals left there to be smuggled in when nobody was looking Well, sir every day ay twice and thrice in the same day there have been orders and complaints and I have been sent flying to all the wholesale chemists in town Every time I brought the stuff back there would be another paper telling me to return it because it was not pure and another order to a different firm This drug is wanted bitter bad sir whatever for?

Have you any of these papers? asked Mr Utterson

Poole felt in his pocket and handed out a crumpled note which the lawyer bending nearer to the candle carefully examined Its contents ran thus Dr Jekyll presents his compliments to Messrs Maw He assures them that their last sample is impure and quite useless for his present purpose In the year 18—, Dr J purchased a somewhat larger quantity from Messrs M He now begs them to search with the most sedulous care and should any of the same quality be left to forward it to him at once Expense is no consideration The importance of this to Dr J can hardly be exaggerated" So far the letter had run composedly enough, but here with a sudden splutter of the pen the writer's

emotion had broken loose For God's sake he added find me some of the old

This is a strange note, said Mr Utterson and then sharply How do you come to have it open?

The man at Maw's was main angry sir and he threw it back to me like so much dirt returned Poole

This is unquestionably the doctor's hand do you know resumed the lawyer

I thought it looked like it said the servant rather sulkily and then with another voice But what matters hand of write? he said I've seen him!

Seen him? repeated Mr Utterson Well?

That's it' said Poole It was this way I came suddenly into the theatre from the garden It seems he had slipped out to look for his drug or whatever it is for the cabinet door was open and there he was at the far end of the room digging among the crates He looked up when I came in, gave a kind of cry and whipped upstairs into the cabinet It was but for one minute that I saw him but the hair stood upon my head like quills Sir if that was my master why had he a mask upon his face? If it was my master why did he cry out like a rat and run from me? I have served him long enough And then the man paused and passed his hand over his face

These are all very strange circumstances said Mr Utterson but I think I begin to see daylight Your master Poole is plainly seized with one of those maladies that both torture and deform the sufferer hence for aught I know the alteration of his voice hence the mask and his avoidance of his friends hence his eagerness to find this drug by means of which the poor soul retains some hope of ultimate recovery—God grant that he be not deceived! There is my explanation it is sad enough Poole ay and appalling to consider but it is plain and natural hangs well together and delivers us from all exorbitant alarms

Sir said the butler turning to a sort of mottled pallor that thing was not my master and there's the truth My master —here he looked round him and began to whisper— is a tall fine build of a man and this was more of a dwarf Utterson attempted to protest O sir cried Poole do you think I do not know my master after twenty years? do you think I do not know where his head comes to in the cabinet door where I saw him every morning of my life? No, sir that thing in the mask was never Dr Jekyll—God knows what it is, but it was never Dr Jekyll and it is the belief of my heart that there was murder done

Poole replied the lawyer if you say that it will become my duty to make certain Much as I desire to spare your master's feelings much as I am puzzled about this note which seems to prove him to be still alive I shall consider it my duty to break in that door

Ah Mr Utterson, that's talking! cried the butler

And now comes the second question resumed Utterson "Who is going to do it?"

Why, you and me sir was the undaunted reply

That is very well said returned the lawyer, and whatever comes of it I shall make it my business to see you are no loser

There is an axe in the theatre continued Poole and you might take the kitchen poker for yourself

The lawyer took that rude but weighty instrument into his hand and balanced it Do you know, Poole he said looking up that you and I are about to place ourselves in a position of some peril?

You may say so sir indeed returned the butler

It is well then that we should be frank said the other We both think more than we have said let us make a clean breast This masked figure that you saw did you recognise it?

Well sir it went so quick and the creature was so doubled up that I could hardly swear to that, was the answer But if you mean was it Mr Hyde?—why yes I think it was! You see it was much the same bigness and it had the same quick light way with it, and then who else could have got in by the laboratory door? You have not forgot sir that at the time of the murder he had still the key with him? But that's not all I don't know Mr Utterson if ever you met this Mr Hyde?

Yes said the lawyer, I once spoke with him

Then you must know as well as the rest of us that there was something queer about that gentleman—something that gave a man a turn—I don't know rightly how to say it, beyond this that you felt it in your marrow—kind of cold and thin

I own I felt something of what you describe said Mr Utterson.

'Quite so sir returned Poole Well when that masked thing like a monkey jumped from among the chemicals and whipped into the cabinet it went down my spine like ice O I know it's not evidence, Mr Utterson I'm book learned enough for that but a man has his feelings and I give you my bible word it was Mr Hyde!

Ay ay said the lawyer My fears incline to the same point Evil I fear founded—evil was sure to come—of that connection Ay, truly I believe you, I believe poor Harry is killed and I believe his murderer (for what purpose God alone can tell) is still lurking in his victim's room Well let our name be vengeance Call Bradshaw

The footman came at the summons very white and nervous

Pull yourself together Bradshaw said the lawyer This suspense I know is telling upon all of you but it is now our intention to make an end of it Poole here and I are going to force our way into the cabinet If all is well, my shoulders are broad enough to bear the blame Meanwhile lest anything should really be amiss or any malefactor seek to escape by the back you and the boy must go round the corner with a pair of good sticks and take your post at the laboratory door We give you ten minutes to get to your stations'

As Bradshaw left, the lawyer looked at his watch And now Poole, let us get to ours he said and taking the poker under his arm he led the way into the yard The scud had banked over the moon and it was now quite dark, The wind, which only broke in puffs and draughts into that deep well of

building tossed the light of the candle to and fro about their steps until they came into the shelter of the theatre where they sat down silently to wait London hummed solemnly all around but nearer at hand the stillness was only broken by the sound of a footfall moving to and fro along the cabinet floor

So it will walk all day sir whispered Poole av and the better part of the night Only when a new sample comes from the chemist there's a bit of a break Ah it's an ill conscience that's such an enemy to rest! Ah sir there's blood foully shed in every step of it! But hark again a little closer—put your heart in your ears Mr Utterson and tell me is that the doctor's foot

The steps fell lightly and oddly with a certain swing for all they went so slowly it was different indeed from the heavy creaking tread of Henry Jekyll Utterson sighed Is there never anything else he asked

Poole nodded Once he said Once I heard it weeping!

Weeping? how that? said the lawyer conscious of a sudden chill of horror Weeping like a woman or a lost soul said the butler I came away with that upon my heart that I could have wept too

But now the ten minutes drew to an end Poole disinterred the axe from under a stack of packing straw the candle was set upon the nearest table to light them to the attack and they drew near with bated breath to where that patient foot was still going up and down up and down in the quiet of the night

Jekyll cried Utterson with a loud voice I demand to see you He paused a moment but there came no reply I give you fair warning our suspicions are aroused and I must and shall see you he resumed if not by fair means then by foul—if not of your consent then by brute force!

Utterson said the voice for God's sake have mercy!

'Ah that's not Jekyll's voice—it's Hyde's' cried Utterson 'Down with the door Poole'

Poole swung the axe over his shoulder the blow shook the building and the red baize door leaped against the lock and hinges A dismal screech as of mere animal terror rang from the cabinet Up went the axe again and again the panels crashed and the frame bounded four times the blow fell but the wood was tough and the fittings were excellent workmanship and it was not until the fifth that the lock burst in sunder and the wreck of the door fell inwards on the carpet

The besiegers appalled by their own riot and the stillness that had succeeded stood back a little and peered in There lay the cabinet before their eyes in the quiet lamplight a good fire glowing and chattering on the hearth the kettle singing its thin strain a drawer or two open, papers neatly set forth on the business table and nearer the fire the things laid out for tea the quietest room, you would have said and but for the glazed presses full of chemicals the most commonplace that night in London

Right in the midst there lay the body of a man sorely contorted and still twitching They drew near on tiptoe turned it on his back and beheld the face of Edward Hyde He was dressed in clothes too large for him clothes of the doctor's bigness the cords of his face still moved with a semblance of life but life was quite gone, and by the crushed phial in the hand and the

strong smell of kernels that hung upon the air Utterson knew that he was looking on the body of a self destroyer

'We have come too late' he said sternly 'whether to save or punish Hyde is gone to his account, and it only remains for us to find the body of your master'

The far greater proportion of the building was occupied by the theatre which filled almost the whole ground storey and was lighted from above and by the cabinet which formed an upper storey at one end and looked upon the court A corridor joined the theatre to the door on the by street and with this the cabinet communicated separately by a second flight of stairs There were besides a few dark closets and a spacious cellar All these they now thoroughly examined Each closet needed but a glance for all were empty and all, by the dust that fell from their doors, had stood long unopened The cellar indeed, was filled with crazy lumber, mostly dating from the times of the surgeon who was Jekyll's predecessor, but even as they opened the door they were advertised of the uselessness of further search by the fall of a perfect mat of cobweb which had for years sealed up the entrance Nowhere was there any trace of Henry Jekyll dead or alive

Poole stamped on the flags of the corridor He must be buried here he said hearkening to the sound

Or he may have fled' said Utterson, and he turned to examine the door in the by-street It was locked and lying near by on the flags they found the key already stained with rust

'This does not look like use' observed the lawyer

'Use' echoed Poole Do you not see sir it is broken? much as if a man had stamped on it'

Ah continued Utterson and the fractures too are rusty' The two men looked at each other with a scare "This is beyond me Poole said the lawyer Let us go back to the cabinet

They mounted the stair in silence and still with an occasional awestruck glance at the dead body proceeded more thoroughly to examine the contents of the cabinet At one table there were traces of chemical work various measured heaps of some white salt being laid on glass saucers as though for an experiment in which the unhappy man had been prevented

That is the same drug that I was always bringing him said Poole, and even as he spoke the kettle with a startling noise boiled over

This brought them to the fireside where the easy chair was drawn cosily up and the tea things stood ready to the sitter's elbow the very sugar in the cup There were several books on a shelf one lay beside the tea things open, and Utterson was amazed to find a copy of a pious work for which Jekyll had several times expressed a great esteem annotated in his own hand with startling blasphemies

Next, in the course of their review of the chamber the searchers came to the cheval glass into whose depths they looked with involuntary horror But it was so turned as to show them nothing but the rosy glow playing on the roof

the fire sparkling in a hundred repetitions along the glazed front of the presses and their own pale and fearful countenances stooping to look in

This glass has seen some strange things sir whispered Poole

And surely none stranger than itself echoed the lawyer in the same tone For what did Jekyll —he caught himself up at the word with a start and then conquering the weakness what could Jekyll want with it? he said

You may say that said Poole

Next they turned to the business table On the desk among the neat array of papers a large envelope was uppermost, and bore in the doctor's hand the name of Mr Utterson The lawyer unsealed it and several enclosures fell to the floor The first was a will drawn in the same eccentric terms as the one which he had returned six months before to serve as a testament in case of death and as a deed of gift in case of disappearance but in place of the name of Edward Hyde the lawyer with indescribable amazement read the name of Gabriel John Utterson He looked at Poole and then back at the papers and last of all at the dead malefactor stretched upon the carpet

My head goes round he said He has been all these days in possession he had no cause to like me he must have raged to see himself displaced and he has not destroyed this document

He caught the next paper it was a brief note in the doctor's hand and dated at the top O Poole! the lawyer cried he was alive and here this day He cannot have been disposed of in so short a space he must be still alive he must have fled! And then why fled? and how? and in that case we venture to declare this suicide? O we must be careful I foresee that we may yet involve your master in some dire catastrophe

Why don't you read it sir? asked Poole

Because I fear replied the lawyer solemnly God grant I have no cause for it! And with that he brought the paper to his eye and read as follows —

'MY DEAR UTTERSON,—When this shall fall into your hands I shall have disappeared under what circumstances I have not the penetration to foresee but my instincts and all the circumstances of my nameless situation tell me that the end is sure and must be early Go then and first read the narrative which Lanyon warned me he was to place in your hands and if you care to hear more turn to the confession of

Your unworthy and unhappy friend
HENRY JEKYLL

There was a third enclosure? asked Utterson

Here sir said Poole and gave into his hands a considerable packet sealed in several places

The lawyer put it in his pocket I would say nothing of this paper If your master has fled or is dead we may at least save his credit It is now ten I must go home and read these documents in quiet, but I shall be back before midnight when we shall send for the police

They went out locking the door of the theatre behind them and Utterson, once more leaving the servants gathered about the fire in the hall trudged back to his office to read the two narratives in which this mystery was now to be explained

IX

DR LANYON'S NARRATIVE

ON THE NINTH OF JANUARY now four days ago I received by the evening delivery a registered envelope addressed in the hand of my colleague and an old school companion Henry Jekyll I was a good deal surprised by this for we were by no means in the habit of correspondence I had seen the man dined with him indeed the night before, and I could imagine nothing in our intercourse that should justify the formality of registration The contents increased my wonder for this is how the letter ran

"10th December, 18-

DEAR LANYON—You are one of my oldest friends, and although we may have differed at times on scientific questions I cannot remember at least on my side any break in our affection There was never a day when if you had said to me Jekyll my life my honour my reason depend upon you I would not have sacrificed my left hand to help you Lanyon my life my honour my reason, are all at your mercy if you fail me to night I am lost You might suppose after this preface that I am going to ask you for something dishonourable to grant Judge for yourself

I want you to postpone all other engagements for to night—ay even if you were summoned to the bedside of an emperor to take a cab unless your carriage should be actually at the door and with this letter in your hand for consultation to drive straight to my house Poole my butler has his orders you will find him waiting your arrival with a locksmith The door of my cabinet is then to be forced and you are to go in alone to open the glazed press (letter E) on the left hand breaking the lock if it be shut and to draw out *with all its contents as they stand*, the fourth drawer from the top or (which is the same thing) the third from the bottom In my extreme distress of mind I have a morbid fear of misdirecting you but even if I am in error you may know the right drawer by its contents some powders, a phial and a paper book This drawer I beg of you to carry back with you to Cavendish Square exactly as it stands

That is the first part of the service now for the second You should be back if you set out at once on the receipt of this long before midnight but I will leave you that amount of margin not only in the fear of one of these obstacles that can neither be prevented nor foreseen but because an hour when your servants are in bed is to be preferred for what will then remain to do At midnight then I have to ask you to be alone in your consulting room to

admit with your own hand into the house a man who will present himself in my name and to place in his hands the drawer that you will have brought with you from my cabinet. Then you will have played your part and earned my gratitude completely. Five minutes afterwards if you insist upon an explanation you will have understood that these arrangements are of capital importance and that by the neglect of one of them fantastic as they must appear you might have charged your conscience with my death or the shipwreck of my reason.

Confident as I am that you will not trifle with this appeal, my heart sinks and my hand trembles at the bare thought of such a possibility. Think of me at this hour in a strange place labouring under a business of distress that no rancy can exaggerate and yet well aware that, if you will but punctually serve me my troubles will roll away like a story that is told. Serve me, my dear Lanyon and save

Your friend

H J

P S—I had already sealed this up when a fresh terror struck upon my soul. It is possible that the post office may fail me and this letter not come into your hands until to morrow morning. In that case dear Lanyon do my errand when it shall be most convenient for you in the course of the day and once more expect my messenger at midnight. It may then already be too late and if that night passes without event you will know that you have seen the last of Henry Jekyll.

Upon the reading of this letter I made sure my colleague was insane but till that was proved beyond the possibility of doubt I felt bound to do as he requested. The less I understood of this farrago the less I was in a position to judge of its importance and an appeal so worded could not be set aside without a grave responsibility. I rose accordingly from table got into a hansom and drove straight to Jekyll's house. The butler was awaiting my arrival he had received by the same post as mine a registered letter of instruction and had sent at once for a locksmith and a carpenter. The tradesmen came while we were yet speaking, and we moved in a body to old Dr Denman's surgical theatre from which (as you are doubtless aware) Jekyll's private cabinet is most conveniently entered. The door was very strong the lock excellent the carpenter avowed he would have great trouble and have to do much damage if force were to be used and the locksmith was near despair. But this last was a handy fellow and after two hours work the door stood open. The press marked E was unlocked and I took out the drawer had it filled up with straw and tied in a sheet and returned with it to Cavendish Square.

Here I proceeded to examine its contents. The powders were neatly enough made up but not with the nicety of the dispensing chemist, so that it was plain they were of Jekyll's private manufacture and when I opened one of the wrappers I found what seemed to me a simple crystalline salt of a white colour. The phial to which I next turned my attention, might have been half full of a blood red liquor, which was highly pungent to the sense of smell and seemed

to me to contain phosphorous and some volatile ether At the other ingredients I could make no guess The book was an ordinary version book and contained little but a series of dates These covered a period of many years but I observed that the entries ceased nearly a year ago and quite abruptly Here and there a brief remark was appended to a date usually no more than a single word double occurring perhaps six times in a total of several hundred entries and once very early in the list and followed by several marks of exclamation, 'total failure' ! ! All this though it whetted my curiosity told me little that was definite Here were a phial of some tincture a paper of some salt, and the record of a series of experiments that had led (like too many of Jekyll's investigations) to no end of practical usefulness How could the presence of these articles in my house affect either the honour the sanity or the life of my flighty colleague? If his messenger could go to one place why could he not go to another? And even granting some impediment why was this gentleman to be received by me in secret? The more I reflected the more convinced I grew that I was dealing with a case of cerebral disease and though I dismissed my servants to bed I loaded an old revolver, that I might be found in some posture of self defence

Twelve o'clock had scarce rung out over London ere the knocker sounded very gently on the door I went myself at the summons, and found a small man crouching against the pillars of the portico

Are you come from Dr Jekyll? I asked

He told me yes by a constrained gesture and when I had bidden him enter he did not obey me without a searching backward glance into the darkness of the square There was a policeman not far off advancing with his bull's eye open and at the sight, I thought my visitor started and made greater haste

These particulars struck me I confess disagreeably and as I followed him into the bright light of the consulting room I kept my hand ready on my weapon. Here at last, I had a chance of clearly seeing him I had never set eyes on him before so much was certain He was small as I have said I was struck besides with the shocking expression of his face with his remarkable combination of great muscular activity and great apparent debility of constitution, and—last but not least—with the odd subjective disturbance caused by his neighbourhood This bore some resemblance to incipient rigor and was accomplished by a marked sinking of the pulse At the time I set it down to some idiosyncratic personal distaste, and merely wondered at the acuteness of the symptoms but I have since had reason to believe the cause to lie much deeper in the nature of man and to turn on some nobler hinge than the principle of hatred

This person (who had thus from the first moment of his entrance struck me what I can only describe as a disgusting curiosity) was dressed in a fashion that would have made an ordinary person laughable, his clothes that is to say although they were of rich and sober fabric were enormously too large for him in every measurement—the trousers hanging on his legs and rolled up to keep them from the ground the waist of the coat below his haunches and the

collar sprawling wide upon his shoulders Strange to relate this ludicrous accoutrement was far from moving me to laughter Rather as there was some thing abnormal and misbegotten in the very essence of the creature that now faced me—something seizing surprising and revolting—this fresh disparity seemed but to fit in with and to reinforce it so that to my interest in the man's nature and character there was added a curiosity as to his origin, his life his fortune and status in the world

These observations, though they have taken a great space to be set down in, were yet the work of a few seconds My visitor was, indeed on fire with sombre excitement

Have you got it? he cried Have you got it? And so lively was his impatience that he even laid his hand upon my arm and sought to shake me

I put him back conscious at his touch of a certain icy pang along my blood Come sir said I You forget that I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance Be seated, if you please And I showed him an example and sat down myself in my customary seat and with as fair an imitation of my ordinary manner to a patient as the lateness of the hour, the nature of my preoccupations and the horror I had of my visitor would suffer me to master

I beg your pardon Dr Lanyon he replied civilly enough "What you say is very well founded, and my impatience has shown its heels to my politeness. I come here at the instance of your colleague Dr Henry Jekyll on a piece of business of some moment and I understood he paused and put his hand to his throat and I could see in spite of his collected manner, that he was wrestling against the approaches of the hysteria— I understood a drawer

But here I took pity on my visitor's suspense and some perhaps on my own growing curiosity

There it is sir ' said I pointing to the drawer, where it lay on the floor behind a table, and still covered with the sheet

He sprang to it and then paused and laid his hand upon his heart I could hear his teeth grate with the convulsive action of his jaws, and his face was so ghastly to see that I grew alarmed both for his life and reason.

Compose yourself said I

He turned a dreadful smile to me and as if with the decision of despair, plucked away the sheet At sight of the contents he uttered one loud sob of such immense relief that I sat petrified And the next moment, in a voice that was already fairly well under control Have you a graduated glass? he asked

I rose from my place with something of an effort, and gave him what he asked

He thanked me with a smiling nod, measured out a few minims of the red tincture and added one of the powders The mixture which was at first of a reddish hue began in proportion as the crystals melted to brighten in colour to effervesce audibly and to throw off small fumes of vapour Suddenly and at the same moment the ebullition ceased, and the compound changed to a dark purple which faded again more slowly to a watery green My visitor, who had watched these metamorphoses with a keen eye, smiled, set down the

glass upon the table and then turned and looked upon me with an air of scrutiny

‘And now,’ said he, to settle what remains Will you be wise? will you be guided? will you suffer me to take this glass in my hand and to go forth from your house without further parley? or has the greed of curiosity too much command of you? Think before you answer for it shall be done as you decide As you decide you shall be left as you were before and neither richer nor wiser unless the sense of service rendered to a man in mortal distress may be counted as a kind of riches of the soul Or if you shall so prefer to choose, a new province of knowledge and new avenues to fame and power shall be laid open to you, here in this room upon the instant and your sight shall be blasted by a prodigy to stagger the unbelief of Satan ’

Sir ’ said I, affecting a coolness that I was far from truly possessing ‘you speak enigmas and you will perhaps not wonder that I hear you with no very strong impression of belief But I have gone too far in the way of inexplicable services to pause before I see the end

It is well replied my visitor Lanyon you remember your vows what follows is under the seal of our profession And now, you who have so long been bound to the most narrow and material views you who have denied the virtue of transcendental medicine, you who have derided your superiors—behold!”

He put the glass to his lips, and drank at one gulp A cry followed he reeled, staggered clutched at the table and held on staring with injected eyes gasping with open mouth and as I looked there came I thought a change—he seemed to swell—his face became suddenly black and the features seemed to melt and alter—and the next moment I had sprung to my feet and leaped back against the wall my arm raised to shield me from that prodigy my mind submerged in terror

O God!” I screamed, and O God!” again and again for there before my eyes—pale and shaken and half fainting, and groping before him with his hands like a man restored from death—there stood Henry Jekyll!

What he told me in the next hour I cannot bring my mind to set on paper I saw what I saw, I heard what I heard, and my soul sickened at it and yet, now when that sight has faded from my eyes I ask myself if I believe it, and I cannot answer My life is shaken to its roots, sleep has left me, the deadliest terror sits by me at all hours of the day and night, I feel that my days are numbered and that I must die and yet I shall die incredulous As for the moral turpitude that man unveiled to me even with tears of penitence, I can not, even in memory, dwell on it without a start of horror I will say but one thing, Utterson and that (if you can bring your mind to credit it) will be more than enough The creature who crept into my house that night was, on Jekyll’s own confession known by the name of Hyde and hunted in every corner of the land as the murderer of Carew

X

HENRY JEKYLL'S FULL STATEMENT OF THE CASE

I WAS BORN in the year 18— to a large fortune endowed besides with excellent parts inclined by nature to industry fond of the respect of the wise and good among my fellow-men and thus as might have been supposed with every guarantee of an honourable and distinguished future And indeed the worst of my faults was a certain impatient gaiety of disposition such as has made the happiness of many but such as I found it hard to reconcile with my impious desire to carry my head high and wear a more than commonly grave countenance before the public Hence it came about that I concealed my pleasures and when I reached years of reflection and began to look around me, and take stock of my progress and position in the world I stood already committed to a profound duplicity of life Many a man would have even blazoned such irregularities as I was guilty of, but from the high views that I had set before me I regarded and hid them with an almost morbid sense of shame It was thus rather the exacting nature of my aspirations than any particular degradation in my faults that made me what I was and with even a deeper trench than the majority of men severed in me those provinces of good and ill which divide and compound man's dual nature In this case I was driven to reflect deeply and inveterately on that hard law of life which lies at the root of religion and is one of the most plentiful springs of distress Though so profound a double dealing I was in no sense a hypocrite both sides of me were in dead earnest I was no more myself when I laid aside restraint and plunged in shame than when I laboured in the eye of day at the furtherance of knowledge or the relief of sorrow and suffering And it chanced that the direction of my scientific studies which led wholly towards the mystic and transcendental, reacted and shed a strong light on this consciousness of the perennial war among my members With every day and from both sides of my intelligence, the moral and the intellectual I thus drew steadily nearer to that truth by whose partial discovery I have been doomed to such a dreadful shipwreck that man is not truly one but truly two I say two because the state of my own knowledge does not pass beyond that point Others will follow others will outstrip me on the same lines and I hazard the guess that man will be ultimately known for a mere policy of multifarious incongruous and independent denizens It was on the moral side and in my own person that I learned to recognise the thorough and primitive duality of man I saw that of the two natures that contended in the field of my consciousness, even if I could rightly be said to be either it was only because I was radically both and from an early date even before the course of my scientific discoveries had begun to suggest the most naked possibility of such a miracle I had learned to dwell with pleasure as a beloved day dream on the thought of the separation of these elements If each I told myself could but be housed in separate identities

life would be relieved of all that was unbearable the unjust might go his way delivered from the aspirations and remorse of his more upright twin and the just could walk steadfastly and securely on his upward path doing the good things in which he found his pleasure and no longer exposed to disgrace and penitence by the hands of this extraneous evil It was the curse of mankind that these incongruous faggots were bound together—that in the agonised womb of consciousness, these polar twins should be continuously struggling How, then, were they dissociated?

I was so far in my reflections when, as I have said a side light began to shine upon the subject from the laboratory table I began to perceive more deeply than it has ever yet been stated the trembling immateriality the mistlike transience of this seemingly so solid body in which we walk attired Certain agents I found to have the power to shake and to pluck back that fleshy vestment even as a wind might toss the curtains of a pavilion For two good reasons I will not enter deeply into this scientific branch of my confession First, because I have been made to learn that the doom and burthen of our life is bound for ever on man's shoulders and when the attempt is made to cast it off it but returns upon us with more unfamiliar and more awful pressure Second because as my narrative will make alas! too evident my discoveries were incomplete Enough then that I not only recognised my natural body from the mere aura and effulgence of certain of the powers that made up my spirit but managed to compound a drug by which these powers should be dethroned from their supremacy and a second form and countenance substituted, none the less natural to me because they were the expression and bore the stamp of lower elements in my soul

I hesitated long before I put this theory to the test of practice I knew well that I risked death for any drug that so potently controlled and shook the very fortress of identity might by the least scruple of an overdose or at the least inopportunity in the moment of exhibition utterly blot out that immaterial tabernacle which I looked to it to change But the temptation of a discovery so singular and profound at last overcame my suggestions of alarm I had long since prepared my tincture I purchased at once from a firm of wholesale chemists a large quantity of a particular salt which I knew from my experiments to be the last ingredient required and late one accursed night I compounded the elements watched them boil and smoke together in the glass and when the ebullition had subsided with a strong glow of courage drank off the potion

The most racking pangs succeeded a grinding in the bones deadly nausea and a horror of the spirit that cannot be exceeded at the hour of birth or death Then these agonies began swiftly to subside and I came to myself as if out of a great sickness There was something strange in my sensations, something indescribably new and from its very novelty incredibly sweet I felt younger, lighter happier in body within I was conscious of a heady recklessness a current of disordered sensual images running like a mill race in my fancy a solution of the bonds of obligation an unknown but not an innocent freedom of the soul I knew myself at the first breath of this new life to be more

wicked tenfold more wicked sold a slave to my original evil and the thought, in that moment braced and delighted me like wine I stretched out my hands exulting in the freshness of these sensations, and in the act I was suddenly aware that I had lost my stature

There was no mirror at that date in my room that which stands beside me as I write was brought there later on and for the very purpose of those transformations The night however was far gone into the morning—the morning black as it was was nearly ripe for the conception of the day—the inmates of my house were locked in the most rigorous hours of slumber and I determined flushed as I was with hope and triumph to venture in my new shape as far as to my bedroom I crossed the yard wherein the constellations looked down upon me I could have thought with wonder the first creature of that sort that their unsleeping vigilance had yet disclosed to them I stole through the corridors a stranger in my own house and coming to my room I saw for the first time the appearance of Edward Hyde

I must here speak by theory alone saying not that which I know but that which I suppose to be most probable The evil side of my nature to which I had now transferred the stamping efficacy was less robust and less developed than the good which I had just deposed Again in the course of my life which had been after all nine tenths a life of effort virtue and control it had been much less exercised and much less exhausted And hence as I think it came about that Edward Hyde was so much smaller slighter and younger than Henry Jekyll Even as good shone upon the countenance of one evil was written broadly and plainly on the face of the other Evil besides (which I must still believe to be the lethal side of man) had left on that body an imprint of deformity and decay And yet when I looked upon that ugly idol in the glass, I was conscious of no repugnance rather of a leap of welcome This too was myself It seemed natural and human In my eyes it bore a livelier image of the spirit it seemed more express and single than the imperfect and divided countenance I had been hitherto accustomed to call mine And in so far I was doubtless right I have observed that when I wore the semblance of Edward Hyde none could come near me at first without a visible misgiving of the flesh This as I take it was because all human beings as we meet them, are commingled out of good and evil and Edward Hyde alone in the ranks of mankind was pure evil

I lingered but a moment at the mirror the second conclusive experiment had yet to be attempted, it yet remained to be seen if I had lost my identity beyond redemption and must flee before daylight from a house that was no longer mine and hurrying back to my cabinet I once more prepared and drank the cup once more suffered the pangs of dissolution and came to myself once more with the character the stature and the face of Henry Jekyll

That night I had come to the fatal cross roads Had I approached my discovery in a more noble spirit had I risked the experiment while under the empire of generous or pious aspirations all must have been otherwise and from these agonies of death and birth I had come forth an angel instead of a fiend The drug had no discriminating action, it was neither diabolical nor

divine it but shook the doors of the prison house of my disposition and like the captives of Philippi that which stood within ran forth At that time my virtue slumbered my evil kept awake by ambition was alert and swift to seize the occasion and the thing that was projected was Edward Hyde Hence, although I had now two characters as well as two appearances one was wholly evil and the other was still the old Henry Jekyll that incongruous compound of whose reformation and improvement I had already learned to despair The movement was thus wholly toward the worse

Even at that time I had not yet conquered my aversions to the dryness of a life of study I would still be merrily disposed at times and as my pleasures were (to say the least) undignified and I was not only well known and highly considered but growing towards the elderly man this incoherency of my life was daily growing more unwelcome It was on this side that my new power tempted me until I fell in slavery I had but to drink the cup to doff at once the body of the noted professor and to assume like a thick cloak that of Edward Hyde I smiled at the notion it seemed to me at the time to be humorous and I made my preparations with the most studious care I took and furnished that house in Soho to which Hyde was tracked by the police and engaged as housekeeper a creature whom I well knew to be silent and unscrupulous On the other side I announced to my servants that a Mr Hyde (whom I described) was to have full liberty and power about my house in the square, and to parry mishaps I even called and made myself a familiar object, in my second character I next drew up that will to which you so much objected so that if anything befell me in the person of Dr Jekyll I could enter on that of Edward Hyde without pecuniary loss And thus fortified as I supposed, on every side, I began to profit by the immense immunities of my position

Men have before hired bravos to transact their crimes, while their own person and reputation sat under shelter I was the first that ever did so for his pleasures I was the first that could thus plod in the public eye with a load of genial respectability, and in a moment like a schoolboy strip off these lendings and spring headlong into the sea of liberty But for me in my impenetrable mantle the safety was complete Think of it—I did not even exist! Let me but escape into my laboratory door give me but a second or two to mix and swallow the draught that I had always standing ready and whatever he had done Edward Hyde would pass away like the stain of breath upon the mirror, and there in his stead quietly at home trimming the midnight lamp in his study a man who could afford to laugh at suspicion would be Henry Jekyll.

The pleasures which I made haste to seek in my disguise were as I have said, undignified I would scarce use a harder term But in the hands of Edward Hyde they soon began to turn towards the monstrous When I would come back from these excursions I was often plunged into a kind of wonder at my vicarious depravity This familiar that I called out of my own soul and sent forth alone to do his good pleasure was a being inherently malign and villainous his every act and thought centred on self, drinking pleasure with bestial avidity from any degree of torture to another relentless like a man of stone Henry Jekyll stood at times aghast before the acts of Edward Hyde but the

situation was apart from ordinary laws and insidiously relaxed the grasp of conscience It was Hyde after all and Hyde alone that was guilty Jekyll was no worse he woke again to his good qualities seemingly unimpaired he would even make haste where it was possible to undo the evil done by Hyde And thus his conscience slumbered

Into the details of the infamy at which I thus connived (for even now I can scarce grant that I committed it) I have no design of entering I mean but to point out the warnings and the successive steps with which my chastisement approached I met with one accident which as it brought on no consequence I shall no more than mention An act of cruelty to a child aroused against me the anger of a passer by whom I recognised the other day in the person of your kinsman the doctor and the child's family joined him there were moments when I feared for my life and at last in order to pacify their too just resentment, Edward Hyde had to bring them to the door and pay them in a cheque drawn in the name of Henry Jekyll But this danger was easily eliminated from the future by opening an account at another bank in the name of Edward Hyde himself and when by sloping my own hand backwards I had supplied my double with a signature I thought I sat beyond the reach of fate

Some two months before the murder of Sir Danvers I had been out for one of my adventures had returned at a late hour and woke the next day in bed with somewhat odd sensations It was in vain I looked about me in vain I saw the decent furniture and tall proportions of my room in the square in vain that I recognised the pattern of the bed curtains and the design of the mahogany frame something still kept insisting that I was not where I was that I had not wakened where I seemed to be but in the little room in Soho where I was accustomed to sleep in the body of Edward Hyde I smiled to myself and in my psychological way began lazily to inquire into the elements of this illusion occasionally even as I did so dropping back into a comfortable morning doze I was still so engaged when in one of my more wakeful moments my eye fell upon my hand Now the hand of Henry Jekyll (as you have often remarked) was professional in shape and size it was large firm white and comely But the hand which I now saw clearly enough in the yellow light of a mid London morning lying half shut on the bedclothes was lean corded knuckly of a dusky pallor and thickly shaded with a swart growth of hair It was the hand of Edward Hyde

I must have stared upon it for near half a minute sunk as I was in the mere stupidity of wonder before terror woke up in my breast as sudden and startling as the crash of cymbals and bounding from bed I rushed to the mirror At the sight that met my eyes my blood was changed into something exquisitely thin and icy Yes I had gone to bed Henry Jekyll I had awakened Edward Hyde How was this to be explained? I asked myself and then with another bound of terror—how was it to be remedied? It was well on in the morning, the servants were up all my drugs were in the cabinet—a long journey, down two pairs of stairs through the anatomical theatre from where I was then standing horror-stricken It might indeed be possible to cover my face but of what use was that when I was unable to conceal the alteration

of my stature? And then with an overpowering sweetness of relief it came back upon my mind that the servants were already used to the coming and going of my second self I had soon dressed as well as I was able in clothes of my own size had soon passed through the house, where Bradshaw stared and drew back at seeing Mr Hyde at such an hour and in such strange array and ten minutes later Dr Jekyll had returned to his own shape and was sitting down with a darkened brow, to make a feint of breakfasting

Small indeed was my appetite This inexplicable incident, this reversal of my previous experience seemed like the Babylonian finger on the wall to be spelling out the letters of my judgment and I began to reflect more seriously than ever before on the issues and possibilities of my double existence That part of me which I had the power of projecting had lately been much exercised and nourished it had seemed to me of late as though the body of Edward Hyde had grown in stature as though (when I wore that form) I were conscious of a more generous tide of blood and I began to spy a danger that, if this were much prolonged the balance of my nature might be permanently overthrown, the power of voluntary change be forfeited and the character of Edward Hyde become irrevocably mine The power of the drug had not been always displayed Once very early in my career, it had totally failed me since then I had been obliged on more than one occasion to double and once with infinite risk of death to treble the amount and these rare uncertainties had cast hitherto the sole shadow on my contentment Now however and in the light of that morning's accident I was led to remark that whereas in the beginning the difficulty had been to throw off the body of Jekyll it had of late gradually but decidedly transferred itself to the other side All things therefore seemed to point to this that I was slowly losing hold of my original and better self and becoming slowly incorporated with my second and worse

Between these two I now felt I had to choose My two natures had memory in common, but all other faculties were most unequally shared between them Jekyll (who was composite) now with the most sensitive apprehensions now with a greedy gusto projected and shared in the pleasures and adventures of Hyde but Hyde was indifferent to Jekyll or but remembered him as the mountain bandit remembers the cavern in which he conceals himself from pursuit Jekyll had more than a father's interest, Hyde had more than a son's indifference To cast in my lot with Jekyll was to die to those appetites which I had long secretly indulged and had of late begun to pamper To cast in with Hyde was to die to a thousand interests and aspirations and to become at a blow and for ever despised and friendless The bargain might appear unequal but there was still another consideration in the scales for while Jekyll would suffer smartingly in the fires of abstinence Hyde would be not even conscious of all that he had lost Strange as my circumstances were the terms of this debate are as old and commonplace as man, much the same inducements and alarms cast the die for any tempted and trembling sinner and it fell out with me as it falls with so vast a majority of my fellows that I chose the better part, and was found wanting in the strength to keep it

Yes, I preferred the elderly and discontented doctor, surrounded by friends,

and cherishing honest hopes and bade a resolute farewell to the liberty the comparative youth the light step leaping pulses and secret pleasures that I had enjoyed in the disguise of Hyde I made this choice perhaps with some unconscious reservation for I neither gave up the house in Soho nor destroyed the clothes of Edward Hyde which still lay ready in my cabinet For two months however I was true to my determination for two months I led a life of such severity as I had never before attained to and enjoyed the compensations of an approving conscience But time began at last to obliterate the freshness of my alarm the praises of conscience began to grow into a thing of course I began to be tortured with throes and longings as of Hyde struggling after freedom and at last in an hour of moral weakness I once again compounded and swallowed the transforming draught

I do not suppose that when a drunkard reasons with himself upon his vice he is once out of five hundred times affected by the dangers that he runs through his brutish physical insensibility, neither had I long as I had considered my position made enough allowance for the complete moral insensibility and insensate readiness to evil which were the leading characters of Edward Hyde Yet it was by these that I was punished My devil had been long caged, and he came out roaring It must have been this I suppose that stirred in my soul that tempest of impatience with which I listened to the civilities of my unhappy victim I declare at least before God no man morally sane could have been guilty of that crime upon so pitiful a provocation and that I struck in no more reasonable spirit than that in which a sick child may break a plaything But I had voluntarily stripped myself of all those balancing instincts by which even the worst of us continues to walk with some degree of steadiness among temptations, and in my case to be tempted however slightly was to fall

Instantly the spirit of hell awoke in me and raged With a transport of glee I mauled the unresisting body tasting delight for every blow and it was not till weariness had begun to succeed that I was suddenly in the top of my delirium struck through the heart by a cold thrill of terror A mist dispersed I saw my life to be forfeit and fled from the scene of these excesses at once glorying and trembling my lust of evil gratified and stimulated my love of life screwed to the topmost peg I ran to the house in Soho and (to make assurance doubly sure) destroyed my papers thence I set out through the lamplit streets in the same divided ecstasy of mind gloating on my crime light headedly devising others in the future and yet still hastening and still hearkening in my wake for the steps of the avenger Hyde had a song upon his lips as he compounded the draught and as he drank it pledged the dead man The pangs of transformation had not done tearing him before Henry Jekyll, with streaming tears of gratitude and remorse had fallen upon his knees and lifted his clasped hands to God The veil of self indulgence was rent from head to foot I saw my life as a whole, I followed it up from the days of childhood when I had walked with my father's hand and through the self denying toils of my professional life to arrive again and again with the same sense of unreality at the damned horrors of the evening I could have screamed aloud,

I sought with tears and prayers to smother down the crowd of hideous images and sounds with which my memory swarmed against me and still between the petitions the ugly face of my iniquity stared into my soul. As the acuteness of this remorse began to die away it was succeeded by a sense of joy. The problem of my conduct was solved. Hyde was thenceforth impossible whether I would or not. I was now confined to the better part of my existence and oh how I rejoiced to think it! with what willing humility I embraced anew the restrictions of natural life! with what sincere renunciation I locked the door by which I had so often gone and come and ground the key under my heel!

The next day came the news that the murder had been overlooked that the guilt of Hyde was patent to the world and that the victim was a man high in public estimation. It was not only a crime it had been a tragic folly. I think I was glad to know it. I think I was glad to have my better impulses thus buttressed and guarded by the terrors of the scaffold. Jekyll was now my city of refuge let but Hyde peep out an instant and the hands of all men would be raised to take and slay him.

I resolved in my future conduct to redeem the past and I can say with honesty that my resolve was fruitful of some good. You know yourself how earnestly in the last months of last year I laboured to relieve suffering you know that much was done for others and that the days passed quietly almost happily for myself. Nor can I truly say that I wearied of this beneficent and innocent life. I think instead that I daily enjoyed it more completely but I was still cursed with my duality of purpose, and as the first edge of my penitence wore off the lower side of me so long indulged so recently chained down began to growl for license. Not that I dreamed of resuscitating Hyde the bare idea of that would startle me to frenzy no it was in my own person that I was once more tempted to trifle with my conscience and it was as an ordinary secret sinner that I at last fell before the assaults of temptation.

There comes an end to all things the most capacious measure is filled at last and this brief condescension to my evil finally destroyed the balance of my soul. And yet I was not alarmed the fall seemed natural like a return to the old days before I had made my discovery. It was a fine clear January day wet under foot where the frost had melted but cloudless overhead and the Regent's Park was full of winter chirrupings and sweet with spring odours. I sat in the sun on a bench the animal within me licking the chops of memory the spiritual side a little drowsed promising subsequent penitence but not yet moved to begin. After all I reflected I was like my neighbours and then I smiled comparing my active goodwill with the lazy cruelty of their neglect. And at the very moment of that vainglorious thought, a qualm came over me a horrid nausea and the most deadly shuddering. These passed away and left me faint and then as in its turn the faintness subsided I began to be aware of a change in the temper of my thoughts a greater boldness a contempt of danger a solution of the bonds of obligation. I looked down my clothes hung formlessly on my shrunken limbs the hand that lay on my knee was corded and hairy I was once more Edward Hyde. A moment before I had been safe of all men's respect, wealthy beloved—the cloth laying for me in the dining

room at home and now I was the common quarry of mankind hunted house less a known murderer thrall to the gallows

My reason wavered but it did not fail me utterly I have more than once observed that in my second character my faculties seemed sharpened to a point and my spirits more tensely elastic thus it came about that where Jekyll perhaps might have succumbed Hyde rose to the importance of that moment My drugs were in one of the presses of my cabinet how was I to reach them? That was the problem that (crushing my temples in my hands) I set my self to solve The laboratory door I had closed If I sought to enter by the house my own servants would consign me to the gallows I saw I must employ another hand and thought of Lanyon How was he to be reached how persuaded? Supposing that I escaped capture in the streets how was I to make my way into his presence? and how should I an unknown and displeasing visitor prevail on the famous physician to rife the study of his colleague Dr Jekyll? Then I remembered that of my original character one part remained to me I could write my own hand and once I had conceived that kindling spark, the way that I must follow became lighted up from end to end

Thereupon, I arranged my clothes as best I could and summoning a passing hansom drove to an hotel in Portland Street the name of which I chanced to remember At my appearance (which was indeed comical enough however tragic a fate these garments covered) the driver could not conceal his mirth I gnashed my teeth upon him with a gust of devilish fury and the smile withered from his face—happily for him—yet more happily for myself for in another instant I had certainly dragged him from his perch At the inn as I entered I looked about me with so black a countenance as made the attendants tremble not a look did they exchange in my presence but obsequiously took my orders led me to a private room and brought me wherewithal to write Hyde in danger of his life was a creature new to me shaken with inordinate anger strung to the pitch of murder lusting to inflict pain Yet the creature was astute mastered his fury with a great effort of the will composed his two important letters one to Lanyon and one to Poole and that he might receive actual evidence of their being posted sent them out with directions that they should be registered

Thenceforward he sat all day over the fire in the private room, gnawing his nails there he dined sitting alone w th his fears the waiter visibly quailing before his eye and thence when the night was fully come he set forth in the corner of a closed cab and was driven to and fro about the streets of the city He I say—I cannot say I That child of Hell had nothing human nothing lived in him but fear and hatred And when at last thinking the driver had begun to grow suspicious he discharged the cab and ventured on foot attired in his misfitting clothes an object marked out for observation into the midst of the nocturnal passengers these two base passions raged within him like a tempest He walked fast haunted by his fears chattering to himself skulking through the less frequented thoroughfares counting the minutes that still divided him from midnight Once a woman spoke to him offering I think, a box of lights He smote her in the face and she fled

When I came to myself at Lanyon's the horror of my old friend perhaps affected me somewhat I do not know it was at least but a drop in the sea to the abhorrence with which I looked back upon these hours A change had come over me It was no longer the fear of the gallows it was the horror of being Hyde that racked me I received Lanyon's condemnation partly in a dream it was partly in a dream that I came home to my own house and got into bed I slept after the prostration of the day with a stringent and profound slumber which not even the nightmares that wrung me could avail to break I awoke in the morning shaken weakened but refreshed I still hated and feared the thought of the brute that slept within me and I had not of course forgotten the appalling dangers of the day before but I was once more at home in my own house and close to my drugs and gratitude for my escape shone so strong in my soul that it rivalled the brightness of hope

I was stepping leisurely across the court after breakfast drinking the chill of the air with pleasure when I was seized again with those indescribable sensations that heralded the change and I had but the time to gain the shelter of my cabinet before I was once again raging and freezing with the passions of Hyde It took on this occasion a double dose to recall me to myself, and alas! six hours after as I sat looking sadly in the fire the pangs returned and the drug had to be re administered In short from that day forth it seemed only by a great effort as of gymnastics and only under the immediate stimulation of the drug that I was able to wear the countenance of Jekyll At all hours of the day and night I would be taken with the premonitory shudder above all, if I slept or even dozed for a moment in my chair it was always as Hyde that I awakened Under the strain of this continually impending doom and by the sleeplessness to which I now condemned myself ay even beyond what I had thought possible to man, I became in my own person a creature eaten up and emptied by fever languidly weak both in body and mind and solely occupied by one thought the horror of my other self But when I slept or when the virtue of the medicine wore off I would leap almost without transition (for the pangs of transformation grew daily less marked) into the possession of a fancy brimming with images of terror a soul boiling with causeless hatreds and a body that seemed not strong enough to contain the raging energies of life The powers of Hyde seemed to have grown with sickliness of Jekyll And certainly the hate that now divided them was equal on each side With Jekyll, it was a thing of vital instinct He had now seen the full deformity of that creature that shared with him some of the phenomena of consciousness and was co heir with him to death and beyond these links of community which in themselves made the most poignant part of his distress he thought of Hyde for all his energy of life as of something not only hellish but inorganic This was the shocking thing that the slime of the pit seemed to utter cries and voices that the amorphous dust gesticulated and sinned that what was dead and had no shape should usurp the office of life And this again that that insurgent horror was knit to him closer than a wife closer than an eye lay caged in his flesh where he heard it mutter and felt it struggle to be born and at every hour of weakness and in the confidence of slumber, prevailed

against him and deposed him out of life The hatred of Hyde for Jekyll was of a different order The terror of the gallows drove him continually to commit temporary suicide and return to his subordinate station of a part instead of a person but he loathed the necessity he loathed the despondency into which Jekyll was now fallen and he resented the dislike with which he was himself regarded Hence the apelike tricks that he would play me scrawling in my own hand blasphemies on the pages of my books burning the letters and destroying the portrait of my father and indeed had it not been for his fear of death he would long ago have ruined himself in order to involve me in the ruin But his love of life is wonderful I go further I who sicken and freeze at the mere thought of him when I recall the abjection and passion of this attachment and when I know how he fears my power to cut him off by suicide I find it in my heart to pity him

It is useless and the time awfully fails me to prolong this description no one has ever suffered such torments let that suffice and yet even to these habit brought—no not alleviation—but a certain callousness of soul a certain acquiescence of despair and my punishment might have gone on for years but for the last calamity which has now befallen and which has finally severed me from my own face and nature My provision of the salt which had never been renewed since the date of the first experiment began to run low I sent out for a fresh supply and mixed the draught the ebullition followed and the first change of colour not the second I drank it, and it was without efficiency You will learn from Poole how I have had London ransacked¹ it was in vain and I am now persuaded that my first supply was impure and that it was that unknown impurity which lent efficacy to the draught

About a week has passed and I am now finishing this statement under the influence of the last of the old powders This then is the last time short of a miracle that Henry Jekyll can think his own thoughts or see his own face (now sadly altered¹) in the glass Nor must I delay too long to bring my writing to an end for if my narrative has hitherto escaped destruction it has been by a combination of great prudence and great good luck Should the throes of change take me in the act of writing it, Hyde will tear it in pieces, but if some time shall have elapsed after I have laid it by his wonderful selfishness and circumscription to the moment will probably save it once again from the action of his apelike spite And indeed the doom that is closing on us both has already changed and crushed him Half an hour from now when I shall again and forever reindue that hated personality I know how I shall sit shuddering and weeping in my chair or continue with the most strained and fear struck ecstasy of listening to pace up and down this room (my last earthly refuge) and give ear to every sound of menace Will Hyde die upon the scaffold² or will he find the courage to release himself at the last moment² God knows I am careless this is my true hour of death and what is to follow concerns another than myself Here then as I lay down the pen and proceed to seal up my confession I bring the life of that unhappy Henry Jekyll to an end

NEW ARABIAN NIGHTS

THE SUICIDE CLUB

STORY OF THE YOUNG MAN WITH THE CREAM TARTS

DURING his residence in London the accomplished Prince Florizel of Bohemia gained the affection of all classes by the seduction of his manner and by a well considered generosity He was a remarkable man even by what was known of him and that was but a small part of what he actually did Although of a placid temper in ordinary circumstances and accustomed to take the world with as much philosophy as any ploughman the Prince of Bohemia was not without a taste for ways of life more adventurous and eccentric than that to which he was destined by his birth Now and then when he fell into a low humour when there was no laughable play to witness in any of the London theatres and when the season of the year was unsuitable to those field sports in which he excelled all competitors he would summon his confidant and Master of the Horse Colonel Geraldine and bid him prepare himself against an evening ramble The Master of the Horse was a young officer of a brave and even temerarious disposition He greeted the news with delight and hastened to make ready Long practice and a varied acquaintance of life had given him a singular faculty in disguise he could adapt not only his face and bearing but his voice and almost his thoughts to those of any rank character or nation and in this way he diverted attention from the Prince and some times gained admission for the pair into strange societies The civil authorities were never taken into the secret of these adventures the imperturbable courage of the man and the ready invention and chivalrous devotion of the other had brought them through a score of dangerous passes and they grew in confidence as time went on.

One evening in March they were driven by a sharp fall of sleet into an Oyster Bar in the immediate neighbourhood of Leicester Square Colonel Geraldine was dressed and painted to represent a person connected with the Press in reduced circumstances while the Prince had as usual travestied his appearance by the addition of false whiskers and a pair of large adhesive eye brows These lent him a shaggy and weather beaten air which for one of his urbanity formed the most impenetrable disguise Thus equipped the commander and his satellite sipped their brandy and soda in security

The bar was full of guests male and female but though more than one of these offered to fall into talk with our adventurers none of them promised to grow interesting upon a nearer acquaintance There was nothing present but the lees of London and the commonplace of disrespectability, and the Prince had already fallen to yawning and was beginning to grow weary of the whole excursion when the swing doors were pushed violently open and a young man, followed by a couple of commissioners entered the bar Each of the commissioners carried a large dish of cream tarts under a cover which they at once removed and the young man made the round of the company, and pressed

these confections upon every one's acceptance with an exaggerated courtesy Sometimes his offer was laughingly accepted sometimes it was firmly or even harshly rejected In these latter cases the new comer always ate the tart himself with some more or less humorous commentary

At last he accosted Prince Florizel

Sir said he with a profound obeisance proffering the tart at the same time between his thumb and forefinger will you so far humour an entire stranger? I can answer for the quality of the pastry having eaten two dozen and three of them myself since five o'clock

I am in the habit replied the Prince of looking not so much to the nature of a gift as to the spirit in which it is offered

The spirit sir returned the young man, with another bow is one of mockery

Mockery? replied Florizel And whom do you propose to mock

I am not here to expound my philosophy replied the other but to distribute these cream tarts If I mention that I heartily include myself in the ridicule of the transaction I hope you will consider honour satisfied and descend If not, you will constrain me to eat my twenty eighth, and I own to being weary of the exercise

You touch me said the Prince and I have all the will in the world to rescue you from this dilemma but upon one condition If my friend and I eat your cakes—for which we have neither of us any natural inclination—we shall expect you to join us at supper by way of recompense

The young man seemed to reflect

I have still several dozen upon hand he said at last and that will make it necessary for me to visit several more bars before my great affair is concluded This will take some time and if you are hungry—

The Prince interrupted him with a polite gesture

My friend and I will accompany you he said 'for we have already a deep interest in your very agreeable mode of passing an evening And now that the preliminaries of peace are settled allow me to sign the treaty for both'

And the Prince swallowed the tart with the best grace imaginable

It is delicious said he

I perceive you are a connoisseur replied the young man

Colonel Geraldine likewise did honour to the pastry and every one in that bar having now either accepted or refused his delicacies the young man with the cream tarts led the way to another and similar establishment. The two commissioners who seemed to have grown accustomed to their absurd employment followed immediately after and the Prince and the Colonel brought up the rear arm in arm and smiling to each other as they went In this order the company visited other taverns where scenes were enacted of a like nature to that already described—some refusing some accepting the favours of this vagabond hospitality and the young man himself eating each rejected tart.

On leaving the third saloon the young man counted his store There were but nine remaining three in one tray and six in the other

Gentlemen, said he addressing himself to his two new followers, 'I am

unwilling to delay your supper I am positively sure you must be hungry I feel that I owe you a special consideration And on this great day for me when I am closing a career of folly of my most conspicuously silly action I wish to behave handsomely to all who give me countenance Gentlemen you shall wait no longer Although my constitution is shattered by previous excesses at the risk of my life I liquidate the suspensory condition

With these words he crushed the nine remaining tarts into his mouth and swallowed them at a single movement each Then turning to the commissioners he gave them a couple of sovereigns

I have to thank you said he, for your extraordinary patience

And he dismissed them with a bow apiece For some seconds he stood looking at the purse from which he had just paid his assistants then with a laugh, he tossed it into the middle of the street and signified his readiness for supper

In a small French restaurant in Soho which had enjoyed an exaggerated reputation for some little while but had already begun to be forgotten and in a private room up two pairs of stairs the three companions made a very elegant supper and drank three or four bottles of champagne talking the while upon indifferent subjects The young man was fluent and gay but he laughed louder than was natural in a person of polite breeding his hands trembled violently and his voice took sudden and surprising inflections which seemed to be independent of his will The dessert had been cleared away and all three had lighted their cigars when the Prince addressed him in these words —

"You will, I am sure pardon my curiosity What I have seen of you has greatly pleased but even more puzzled me And though I should be loath to seem indiscreet, I must tell you that my friend and I are persons very well worthy to be entrusted with a secret We have many of our own which we are continually revealing to improper ears And if as I suppose your story is a silly one you need have no delicacy with us who are two of the silliest men in England My name is Godall Theophilus Godall my friend is Major Alfred Hammersmith—or at least, such is the name by which he chooses to be known We pass our lives entirely in the search for extravagant adventures and there is no extravagance with which we are not capable of sympathy

I like you Mr Godall returned the young man, you inspire me with a natural confidence and I have not the slightest objection to your friend the Major whom I take to be a nobleman in masquerade At least I am sure he is no soldier

The Colonel smiled at this compliment to the perfection of his art, and the young man went on in a more animated manner

There is every reason why I should not tell you my story Perhaps that is just the reason why I am going to do so At least you seem so well prepared to hear a tale of silliness that I cannot find it in my heart to disappoint you My name in spite of your example I shall keep to myself My age is not essential to the narrative I am descended from my ancestors by ordinary generation, and from them I inherited the very eligible human tenement which I still occupy and a fortune of three hundred pounds a year I suppose they also handed on to me a hare brain humour which it has been my chief delight to

indulge I received a good education I can play the violin nearly well enough to earn money in the orchestra of a penny gaff but not quite The same remark applies to the flute and the French horn I learned enough of whist to lose a hundred a year at that scientific game My acquaintance with French was sufficient to enable me to squander money in Paris with almost the same facility as in London In short I am a person full of manly accomplishments I have had every sort of adventure including a duel about nothing Only two months ago I met a young lady exactly suited to my taste in mind and body I found my heart melt I saw that I had come upon my fate at last and was in the way to fall in love But when I came to reckon up what remained to me of my capital I found it amounted to something less than four hundred pounds! I ask you fairly—can a man who respects himself fall in love on four hundred pounds? I concluded certainly not left the presence of my charmer and slightly accelerating my usual rate of expenditure came this morning to my last eighty pounds This I divided into two equal parts forty I reserved for a particular purpose the remaining forty I was to dissipate before the night I have passed a very entertaining day and played many farces besides that of the cream tarts which procured me the advantage of your acquaintance for I was determined as I told you to bring a foolish career to a still more foolish conclusion and when you saw me throw my purse into the street the forty pounds were at an end Now you know me as well as I know myself a fool but consistent in his folly and as I will ask you to believe neither a whimperer nor a coward

From the whole tone of the young man's statement it was plain that he harboured very bitter and contemptuous thoughts about himself His auditors were led to imagine that his love affair was nearer his heart than he admitted, and that he had a design on his own life The farce of the cream tarts began to have very much the air of a tragedy in disguise

Why is this not odd broke out Geraldine giving a look to Prince Florizel that we three fellows should have met by the merest accident in so large a wilderness as London and should be so nearly in the same condition?

How? cried the young man Are you too ruined? Is this supper a folly like my cream tarts? Has the devil brought three of his own together for a last carouse?

The devil depend upon it, can sometimes do a very gentlemanly thing ' returned Prince Florizel and I am so much touched by this coincidence that, although we are not entirely in the same case I am going to put an end to the disparity Let your heroic treatment of the last cream tarts be my example

So saying the Prince drew out his purse and took from it a small bundle of bank notes

You see I was a week or so behind you but I mean to catch you up and come neck and neck into the winning post he continued This laying one of the notes upon the table will suffice for the bill As for the rest—

He tossed them into the fire and they went up the chimney in a single blaze

The young man tried to catch his arm, but as the table was between them his interference came too late

Unhappy man he cried you should not have burned them all You should have kept forty pounds

Forty pounds' repeated the Prince Why in heaven's name forty pounds

Why not eighty? cried the Colonel for to my certain knowledge there must have been a hundred in the bundle

It was only forty pounds he needed said the young man gloomily But without them there is no admission The rule is strict Forty pounds for each Accursed life where a man cannot even die without money!

The Prince and the Colonel exchanged glances

Explain yourself, said the latter I have still a pocket book tolerably well lined and I need not say how readily I should share my wealth with Godall But I must know to what end you must certainly tell us what you mean

The young man seemed to awaken, he looked uneasily from one to the other and his face flushed deeply

You are not fooling me? he asked You are indeed ruined men like me?"

Indeed I am for my part replied the Colonel

And for mine said the Prince I have given you proof Who but a ruined man would throw his notes into the fire? The action speaks for itself

A ruined man—yes returned the other suspiciously, "or else a million aire'

'Enough sir' said the Prince I have said so, and I am not accustomed to have my word remain in doubt

Ruined? said the young man Are you ruined like me? Are you after a life indulgence come to such a pass that you can only indulge yourself in one thing more? Are you—he kept lowering his voice as he went on—are you going to give yourselves that last indulgence? Are you going to avoid the consequences of your folly by the one infallible and easy path? Are you going to give the slip to the sheriff's officers of conscience by the one open door?

Suddenly he broke off and attempted to laugh

'Here is your health!' he cried emptying his glass and good night to you, my merry ruined men

Colonel Geraldine caught him by the arm as he was about to rise

'You lack confidence in us he said and you are wrong To all your questions I make answer in the affirmative But I am not so timid and can speak the Queen's English plainly We too like yourself have had enough of life and are determined to die Sooner or later alone or together we meant to seek out death and beard him where he lies ready Since we have met you and your case is more pressing let it be to-night—and at once—and if you will all three together Such a penniless trio he cried should go arm in arm into the halls of Pluto, and give each other some countenance among the shades'

Geraldine had hit exactly on the manners and intonations that became the part he was playing The Prince himself was disturbed and looked over at his confidant with a shade of doubt As for the young man the flush came back darkly into his cheek and his eyes threw out a spark of light

You are the men for me! he cried with an almost terrible gaiety Shake hands upon the bargain! (his hand was cold and wet) You little know w

what a company you will begin the march! You little know in what a happy moment for yourselves you partook of my cream tarts! I am only a unit, but I am a unit in an army I know Death's private door I am one of his familiars and can show you into eternity without ceremony and yet without scandal.

They called upon him eagerly to explain his meaning

Can you master eighty pounds between you? he demanded

Geraldine ostentatiously consulted his pocket book, and replied in the affirmative

Fortunate beings! cried the young man Forty pounds is the entry money of the Suicide Club

The Suicide Club said the Prince why what the devil is that

Listen said the young man this is the age of convenience and I have to tell you of the last perfection of the sort We have affairs in different places and thence railways were invented Railways separated us infallibly from our friends and so telegraphs were made that we might communicate speedily at great distances Even in hotels we have lifts to spare us a climb of some hundred steps Now we know that life is only a stage to play the fool upon as long as the part amuses us There was one more convenience lacking to modern comfort a decent easy way to quit that stage the back stairs to liberty or as I said this moment Death's private door This my two fellow rebels is supplied by the Suicide Club Do not suppose that you and I are alone or even exceptional in the highly reasonable desire that we profess A large number of our fellowmen who have grown heartily sick of the performance in which they are expected to join daily and all their lives long are only kept from flight by one or two considerations Some have families who would be shocked or even blamed if the matter became public others have a weakness at heart and recoil from the circumstances of death That is to some extent my own experience I cannot put a pistol to my head and draw the trigger for something stronger than myself withholds the act and although I loathe life I have not strength enough in my body to take hold of death and be done with it For such as I and for all who desire to be out of the coil without posthumous scandal the Suicide Club has been inaugurated How this has been managed what is its history or what may be its ramifications in other hands I am myself uninformed and what I know of its constitution I am not at liberty to communicate to you To this extent however I am at your service If you are truly tired of life I will introduce you to-night to a meeting, and if not to night, at least some time within the week and you will be easily relieved of your existences It is now (consulting his watch) eleven by half past at latest, we must leave this place, so that you have half an hour before you to consider my proposal It is more serious than a cream tart, he added with a smile and I suspect more palatable

More serious certainly, returned Colonel Geraldine and as it is so much more so will you allow me five minutes speech in private with my friend Mr Godall?

It is only fair answered the young man If you will permit I will retire
'You will be very obliging said the Colonel

As soon as the two were alone— What said Prince Florizel is the use of ths confabulation Geraldine? I see you are flurried whereas my mind is very tranquilly made up I will see the end of this

'Your Highness' said the Colonel turning pale 'let me ask you to consider the importance of your life not only to your friends but to the public interest If not to night said this madman but supposing that to night some irreparable disaster were to overtake your Highness's person what let me ask you what would be my despair, and what the concern and disaster of a great nation'

I will see the end of this ' repeated the Prince in his most deliberate tones and have the kindness Colonel Geraldine to remember and respect your word of honour as a gentleman Under no circumstances recollect nor without my special authority are you to betray the incognito under which I choose to go abroad These were my commands which I now reiterate And now he added let me ask you to call for the bill

Colonel Geraldine bowed in submission, but he had a very white face as he summoned the young man of the cream tarts and issued his directions to the waiter The Prince preserved his undisturbed demeanour and described a Palais Royal farce to the young suicide with great humour and gusto He avoided the Colonel's appealing looks without ostentation and selected another cheroot with more than usual care Indeed he was now the only man of the party who kept any command over his nerves

The bill was discharged the Prince giving the whole change of the note to the astonished waiter and the three drove off in a four wheeler They were not long upon the way before the cab stopped at the entrance to a rather dark court Here all descended

After Geraldine had paid the fare the young man turned and addressed Prince Florizel as follows —

'It is still time Mr Godall to make good your escape into thraldom And for you too Major Hammersmith Reflect well before you take another step and if your hearts say no—here are the cross roads

Lead on sir said the Prince I am not the man to go back from a thing once said

'Your coolness does me good replied their guide 'I have never seen any one so unmoved at this conjuncture and yet you are not the first whom I have escorted to this door More than one of my friends has preceded me, where I knew I must shortly follow But this is of no interest to you Wait me here for only a few moments, I shall return as soon as I have arranged the preliminaries of your introduction

And with that the young man waving his hand to his companions turned into the court entered a doorway and disappeared

Of all our follies said Colonel Geraldine in a low voice, this is the wild est and most dangerous

I perfectly believe so returned the Prince

We have still pursued the Colonel a moment to ourselves Let me be seech your Highness to profit by the opportunity and retire The consequences

of this step are so dark and may be so grave that I feel myself justified in pushing a little farther than usual the liberty which your Highness is so condescending as to allow me in private

Am I to understand that Colonel Geraldine is afraid? asked his Highness, taking his cheroot from his lips and looking keenly into the other's face

My fear is certainly not personal replied the other proudly of that your Highness may rest well assured

I had supposed as much returned the Prince with undisturbed good humour but I was unwilling to remind you of the difference in our stations No more—no more he added seeing Geraldine about to apologize you stand excused

And he smoked placidly leaning against a railing until the young man returned

Well he asked has our reception been arranged?

'Follow me was the reply The President will see you in the cabinet And let me warn you to be frank in your answers I have stood your guarantee but the club requires a searching inquiry before admission for the indiscretion of a single member would lead to the dispersion of the whole society for ever

The Prince and Geraldine put their heads together for a moment Bear me out in this said the one and bear me out in that said the other and by boldly taking up the characters of men with whom both were acquainted they had come to an agreement in a twinkling and were ready to follow their guide into the President's cabinet

There were no formidable obstacles to pass The outer door stood open the door of the cabinet was ajar and there in a small but very high apartment the young men left them once more

He will be here immediately he said with a nod as he disappeared

Voices were audible in the cabinet through the folding doors which formed one end and now and then the noise of a champagne cork followed by a burst of laughter intervened among the sounds of conversation A single tall window looked out upon the river and the embankment and by the disposition of the lights they judged themselves not far from Charing Cross station The furniture was scanty and the coverings worn to the thread and there was nothing movable except a hand bell in the centre of a round table and the hats and coats of a considerable party hung round the wall on pegs

What sort of a den is this? said Geraldine

That is what I have come to see replied the Prince If they keep live devils on the premises the thing may grow amusing

Just then the folding door was opened no more than was necessary for the passage of a human body and there entered at the same moment a louder buzz of talk and the redoubtable President of the Suicide Club The President was a man of fifty upwards large and rambling in his gait, with shaggy side whiskers a bald top to his head and a veiled grey eye which now and then emitted a twinkle His mouth which embraced a large cigar he kept continually screwing round and round and from side to side as he looked sagaciously and coldly

at the strangers He was dressed in light tweeds with his neck very open in a striped shirt collar and carried a minute book under one arm

Good evening said he after he had closed the door behind him 'I am told you wish to speak with me

We have a desire sir to join the Suicide Club replied the Colonel

The President rolled his cigar about his mouth

'What is that?' he said abruptly

'Pardon me' returned the Colonel but I believe you are the person best qualified to give us information on that point

'I' cried the President A Suicide Club? Come, come! this is a frolic for All Fools Day I can make allowance for gentlemen who get merry in their liquor but let there be an end to this

Call your Club what you will said the Colonel, you have some company behind these doors and we insist on joining it

Sir returned the President curtly you have made a mistake This is a private house and you must leave instantly

The Prince had remained quietly in his seat throughout this little colloquy but now when the Colonel looked over to him as much as to say Take your answer and come away for God's sake! he drew his cheroot from his mouth, and spoke—

I have come here said he 'upon the invitation of a friend of yours He had doubtless informed you of my intention in thus intruding on your party Let me remind you that a person in my circumstances has exceedingly little to bind him and is not at all likely to tolerate much rudeness I am a very quiet man as a usual thing but my dear sir you are either going to oblige me in the little matter of which you are aware or you shall very bitterly repent that you ever admitted me to your ante chamber

The President laughed aloud

'That is the way to speak' said he 'You are a man who is a man You know the way to my heart and can do what you like with me Will you he continued addressing Geraldine will you step aside for a few minutes? I shall finish first with your companion and some of the club's formalities require to be fulfilled in private

With these words he opened the door of a small closet into which he shut the Colonel

I believe in you' he said to Florizel, as soon as they were alone, but are you sure of your friend?

Not so sure as I am of myself though he has more cogent reasons answered Florizel but sure enough to bring him here without alarm He has had enough to cure the most tenacious man of life He was cashiered the other day for cheating at cards

A good reason, I daresay replied the President at least we have another in the same case and I feel sure of him Have you also been in the Service, may I ask?"

I have' was the reply but I was too lazy I left it early'

What is your reason for being tired of life? pursued the President

The same, as near as I can make out, answered the Prince, unadulterated laziness

The President started D—n it, said he 'you must have something better than hat

I have no more money added Florizel That is also a vexation, without doubt It brings my sense of idleness to an acute point

The President rolled his cigar round in his mouth for some seconds directing his gaze straight into the eyes of this unusual neophyte but the Prince supported his scrutiny with unabashed good temper

'If I had not a dea¹ of experience said the President at last, I should turn you off But I know the world and this much any way that the most frivolous excuses for a suicide are often the toughest to stand by And when I downright like a man, as I do you, sir I would rather strain the regulation than deny him

The Prince and the Colonel one after the other were subjected to a long and particular interrogatory the Prince alone but Geraldine in the presence of the Prince so that the President might observe the countenance of the one while the other was being warmly cross examined The result was satisfactory and the President after having booked a few details of each case produced a form of oath to be accepted Nothing could be conceived more passive than the obedience promised or more stringent than the terms by which the juror bound himself The man who forfeited a pledge so awful could scarcely have a rag of honour or any of the consolations of religion left to him Florizel signed the document but not without a shudder the Colonel followed his example with an air of great depression Then the President received the entry money and without more ado introduced the two friends into the smoking-room of the Suicide Club

The smoking room of the Suicide Club was the same height as the cabinet into which it opened but much larger, and papered from top to bottom with an imitation of oak wainscot A large and cheerful fire and a number of gas-jets illuminated the company The Prince and his follower made the number up to eighteen Most of the party were smoking and drinking champagne, a feverish hilarity reigned with sudden and rather ghastly pauses

Is this a full meeting? asked the Prince

Middling said the President By the way he added if you have any money it is usual to offer some champagne It keeps up a good spirit and is one of my own little perquisites

Hammersmith said Florizel, I may leave the champagne to you

And with that he turned away and began to go round among the guests Accustomed to play the host in the highest circles he charmed and dominated all whom he approached there was something at once winning and authoritative in his address and his extraordinary coolness gave him yet another distinction in this half maniacal society As he went from one to another he kept both his eyes and ears open and soon began to gain a general idea of the people among whom he found himself As in all other places of resort one type predominated people in the prime of youth with every show of intelligence

and sensibility in their appearance but with little promise of strength or the quality that makes success Few were much above thirty and not a few were still in their teens They stood leaning on tables and shifting on their feet sometimes they smoked extraordinarily fast and sometimes they let their cigars go out some talked well but the conversation of others was plainly the result of nervous tension and was equally without wit or purport As each new bottle of champagne was opened there was a manifest improvement in gaiety Only two were seated—one in a chair in the recess of the window with his head hanging and his hands plunged deep into his trouser pockets pale visibly moist with perspiration saying never a word a very wreck of soul and body the other sat on the divan close by the chimney and attracted notice by a trenchant dissimilarity from all the rest He was probably upwards of forty but he looked fully ten years older and Florizel thought he had never seen a man more naturally hideous nor one more ravaged by disease and ruinous excitements He was no more than skin and bone was partly paralysed, and wore spectacles of such unusual power that his eyes appeared through the glasses greatly magnified and distorted in shape Except the Prince and the President, he was the only person in the room who preserved the composure of ordinary life

There was little decency among the members of the club Some boasted of the disgraceful actions the consequences of which had reduced them to seek refuge in death and the others listened without disapproval There was a tacit understanding against moral judgments and whoever passed the club doors enjoyed already some of the immunities of the tomb They drank to each other's memories and to those of notable suicides in the past They compared and developed their different views of death—some declaring that it was no more than blackness and cessation others full of hope that that very night they should be scaling the stars and commerçing with the mighty dead

To the eternal memory of Baron Trenck the type of suicides' cried one 'He went out of a small cell into a smaller that he might come forth again to freedom

For my part, said a second 'I wish no more than a bandage for my eyes and cotton for my ears Only they have no cotton thick enough in this world'

A third was for reading the mysteries of life in a future state and a fourth professed that he would never have joined the club if he had not been induced to believe in Mr Darwin

I could not bear said this remarkable suicide 'to be descended from an ape'

Altogether the Prince was disappointed by the bearing and conversation of the members

It does not seem to me he thought a matter for so much disturbance If a man has made up his mind to kill himself let him do it in God's name like a gentleman This flutter and big talk is out of place

In the meanwhile Colonel Geraldine was a prey to the blackest apprehensions the club and its rules were still a mystery and he looked round the room for some one who should be able to set his mind at rest In this survey

his eye lighted on the paralytic person with the strong spectacles, and seeing him so exceedingly tranquil he besought the President who was going in and out of the room under a pressure of business to present him to the gentleman on the divan

The functionary explained the needlessness of all such formalities within the club but nevertheless presented Mr Hammersmith to Mr Malthus

Mr Malthus looked at the Colonel curiously and then requested him to take a seat upon his right

You are a new comer he said and wish information? You have come to the proper source It is two years since I first visited this charming club

The Colonel breathed again If Mr Malthus had frequented the place for two years there could be little danger for the Prince in a single evening But Geraldine was none the less astonished and began to suspect a mystification

What! cried he two years! I thought—but indeed I see I have been made the subject of a pleasantry

By no means replied Mr Malthus mildly 'My case is peculiar I am not properly speaking a suicide at all but as it were an honorary member I rarely visit the club twice in two months My infirmity and the kindness of the President have procured me these little immunities for which besides I pay at an advanced rate Even as it is my luck has been extraordinary

I am afraid said the Colonel that I must ask you to be more explicit You must remember that I am still most imperfectly acquainted with the rules of the club

An ordinary member who comes here in search of death like yourself replied the paralytic returns every evening until fortune favours him He can even, if he is penniless get board and lodging from the President very fair I believe and clean although of course not luxurious that could hardly be considering the exiguity (if I may so express myself) of the subscription And then the President's company is a delicacy in itself

Indeed! cried Geraldine he had not greatly prepossessed me "

Ah! said Mr Malthus you do not know the man the drollest fellow! What stories! What cynicism! He knows life to admiration and, between ourselves is probably the most corrupt rogue in Christendom

And he also asked the Colonel, is a permanency—like yourself if I may say so without offence?

Indeed he is a permanency in a very different sense from me replied Mr Malthus I have been graciously spared, but I must go at last Now he never plays He shuffles and deals for the club and makes the necessary arrangements That man my dear Mr Hammersmith is the very soul of ingenuity For three years he has pursued in London his useful and I think I may add his artistic calling and not so much as a whisper of suspicion has been once aroused I believe him myself to be inspired You doubtless remember the celebrated case six months ago of the gentleman who was accidentally poisoned in a chemist's shop? That was one of the least rich one of the least racy, of his notions but then, how simple! and how safe!

You astound me said the Colonel Was that unfortunate gentleman on

of the— He was about to say victims, but bethinking himself in time, he substituted— members of the club?

In the same flash of thought, it occurred to him that Mr Malthus himself had not at all spoken in the tone of one who is in love with death, and he added hurriedly,

But I perceive I am still in the dark You speak of shuffling and dealing pray for what end? And since you seem rather unwilling to die than otherwise I must own that I cannot conceive what brings you here at all

You say truly that you are in the dark, replied Mr Malthus with more animation. Why, my dear sir this club is the temple of intoxication. If my enfeebled health could support the excitement more often, you may depend upon it I should be more often here. It requires all the sense of duty engendered by a long habit of ill-health and careful regimen to keep me from excess in this which is I may say my dissipation I have tried them all sir he went on laying his hand on Geraldine's arm all without exception, and I declare to you upon my honour there is not one of them that has not been grossly and untruthfully overrated. People trifle with love. Now I deny that love is a strong passion. Fear is the strong passion it is with fear that you must trifle if you wish to taste the intensest joys of living. Envy me—envy me, sir he added with a chuckle I am a coward!

Geraldine could scarcely repress a movement of repulsion for this deplorable wretch, but he commanded himself with an effort, and continued his inquiries

How, sir" he asked 'is the excitement so artfully prolonged? and where is there any element of uncertainty?

I must tell you how the victim for every evening is selected' returned Mr Malthus, and not only the victim but another member, who is to be the instrument in the club's hands and death's high priest for that occasion.

'Good God' said the Colonel do they then kill each other?

'The trouble of suicide is removed in that way, returned Malthus with a nod

'Merciful heavens!" ejaculated the Colonel 'and may you—may I—may the—my friend I mean—may any of us be pitched upon this evening as the slayer of another man's body and immortal spirit? Can such things be possible among men born of women? Oh! infamy of infamies'

He was about to rise in his horror when he caught the Prince's eye. It was fixed upon him from across the room with a frowning and angry stare. And in a moment Geraldine recovered his composure

"After all he added why not? And since you say the game is interesting *vogue la galere*—I follow the club!"

Mr Malthus had keenly enjoyed the Colonel's amazement and disgust. He had the vanity of wickedness, and it pleased him to see another man give way to a generous movement, while he felt himself, in his entire corruption, superior to such emotions

"You now after your first moment of surprise" said he, 'are in a position to appreciate the delights of our society. You can see how it combines the

excitement of a gaming table a duel and a Roman amphitheatre The Pagans did well enough I cordially admire the refinement of their minds but it has been reserved for a Christian country to attain this extreme this quintessence, this absolute of poignancy You will understand how vapid are all amusements to a man who has acquired a taste for this one The game we play he continued is one of extreme simplicity A full pack—but I perceive you are about to see the thing in progress Will you lend me the help of your arm? I am unfortunately paralysed

Indeed just as Mr Malthus was beginning his description another pair of folding doors was thrown open, and the whole club began to pass not without some hurry into the adjoining room It was similar in every respect to the one from which it was entered but somewhat differently furnished The centre was occupied by a long green table at which the President at shuffling a pack of cards with great particularity Even with the stick and the Colonel's arm Mr Malthus walked with so much difficulty that every one was seated before this pair and the Prince who had waited for them entered the apartment and, in consequence, the three took seats close together at the lower end of the board

It is a pack of fifty two ' whispered Mr Malthus Watch for the ace of spades which is the sign of death and the ace of clubs which designates the official of the night Happy happy young men! he added You have good eyes and can follow the game Alas! I cannot tell an ace from a deuce across the table

And he proceeded to equip himself with a second pair of spectacles

I must at least watch the faces he explained

The Colonel rapidly informed his friend of all that he had learned from the honorary member and of the horrible alternative that lay before them The Prince was conscious of a deadly chill and a contraction about his heart he swallowed with difficulty and looked from side to side like a man in a maze

One bold stroke whispered the Colonel and we may still escape

But the suggestion recalled the Prince's spirits

Silence! said he Let me see that you can play like a gentleman for any stake however serious

And he looked about him, once more to all appearance at his ease although his heart beat thickly and he was conscious of an unpleasant heat in his bosom The members were all very quiet and intent every one was pale, but none so pale as Mr Malthus His eyes protruded his head kept nodding involuntarily upon his spine his hands found their way one after the other to his mouth where they made clutches at his tremulous and ashen lips It was plain that the honorary member enjoyed his membership on very startling terms

Attention gentlemen! said the President

And he began slowly dealing the cards about the table in the reverse direction pausing until each man had shown his card Nearly every one hesitated and sometimes you would see a player's fingers stumble more than once before he could turn over the momentous slip of pasteboard As the Prince's turn

drew nearer he was conscious of a growing and almost suffocating excitement, but he had somewhat of the gambler's nature and recognised almost with astonishment that there was a degree of pleasure in his sensations. The nine of clubs fell to his lot the three of spades was dealt to Geraldine and the queen of hearts to Mr Malthus who was unable to suppress a sob of relief. The young man of the cream tarts almost immediately afterwards turned over the ace of clubs and remained frozen with horror the card still resting on his finger he had not come there to kill but to be killed and the Prince in his generous sympathy with his position forgot the peril that still hung over himself and his friend.

The deal was coming round again, and still Death's card had not come out. The players held their respiration and only breathed by gasps. The Prince received another club. Geraldine had a diamond but when Mr Malthus turned up his card a horrible noise like that of something breaking issued from his mouth and he rose from his seat and sat down again with no sign of his paralysis. It was the ace of spades. The honorary member had trifled once too often with his terrors.

Conversation broke out again almost at once. The players relaxed their rigid attitudes and began to rise from the table and stroll back by twos and threes into the smoking-room. The President stretched his arms and yawned like a man who had finished his day's work. But Mr Malthus sat in his place with his head in his hands and his hands upon the table drunk and motionless—a thing stricken down.

The Prince and Geraldine made their escape at once. In the cold night air their horror of what they had witnessed was redoubled.

Alas! cried the Prince to be bound by an oath in such a matter! to allow this wholesale trade in murder to be continued with profit and impunity! If I but dared to forfeit my pledge!

That is impossible for your Highness replied the Colonel whose honour is the honour of Bohemia. But I dare and may with propriety forfeit mine.

Geraldine said the Prince if your honour suffers in any of the adventures into which you follow me not only will I never pardon you but—what I believe will much more sensibly affect you—I should never forgive myself.

I receive your Highness's commands replied the Colonel Shall we go from this accursed spot?

Yes said the Prince Call a cab in Heaven's name, and let me try to forget in slumber the memory of this night's disgrace.

But it was notable that he carefully read the name of the court before he left it.

The next morning as soon as the Prince was stirring Colonel Geraldine brought him a daily newspaper with the following paragraph marked—

MELANCHOLY ACCIDENT—This morning about two o'clock Mr Bartholo new Malthus of 16 Chepstow Place Westbourne Grove on his way home from a party at a friend's house fell over the upper parapet in Trafalgar Square fracturing his skull and breaking a leg and an arm. Death was instantaneous. Mr Malthus accompanied by a friend was engaged in look

ing for a cab at the time of the unfortunate occurrence As Mr Malthus was paralytic it is thought that his fall may have been occasioned by another seizure The unhappy gentleman was well known in the most respectable circles and his loss will be widely and deeply deplored

'If ever a soul went straight to Hell said Geraldine solemnly 'it was that paralytic man's

The Prince buried his face in his hands and remained silent

I am almost rejoiced continued the Colonel to know that he is dead But for our young man of the cream tarts I confess my heart bleeds

Geraldine said the Prince, raising his face that unhappy lad was last night as innocent as you and I and this morning the guilt of blood is on his soul When I think of the President my heart grows sick within me I do not know how it shall be done but I shall have that scoundrel at my mercy as there is a God in heaven What an experience what a lesson was that game of cards'

One said the Colonel never to be repeated

The Prince remained so long without replying that Geraldine grew alarmed

You cannot mean to return he said You have suffered too much and seen too much horror already The duties of your high position forbid the repetition of the hazard

There is much in what you say replied Prince Florizel and I am not altogether pleased with my own determination Alas' in the clothes of the greatest potentate what is there but a man? I never felt my weakness more acutely than now Geraldine but it is stronger than I Can I cease to interest myself in the fortunes of the unhappy young man who supped with us some hours ago? Can I leave the President to follow his nefarious career unwatched? Can I begin an adventure so entrancing and not follow it to an end? No Geraldine you ask of the Prince more than the man is able to perform To night, once more we take our places at the table of the Suicide Club

Colonel Geraldine fell upon his knees

'Will your Highness take my life? he cried It is his—freely, but do not, O do not! let him ask me to countenance so terrible a risk

'Colonel Geraldine replied the Prince with some haughtiness of manner, 'your life is absolutely your own I only looked for obedience and when that is unwillingly rendered I shall look for that no longer I add one word your importance in this affair has been sufficient

The Master of the Horse regained his feet at once

Your Highness he said may I be excused in my attendance this after noon? I dare not as an honourable man venture a second time into that fatal house until I have perfectly ordered my affairs Your Highness shall meet I promise him, with no more opposition from the most devoted and grateful of her servants

My dear Geraldine returned Prince Florizel I always regret when you oblige me to remember my rank Dispose of your day as you think, but be here before eleven in the same disguise

The club, on this second evening was not so fully attended and when Geraldine and the Prince arrived there were not above half a dozen persons in the smoking room His Highness took the President aside and congratulated him warmly on the demise of Mr Malthus

I like he said to meet with capacity and certainly find much of it in you Your profession is of a very delicate nature but I see you are well qualified to conduct it with success and secrecy

The President was somewhat affected by these compliments from one of his Highness's superior bearing He acknowledged them almost with humility

Poor Malthy' he added I shall hardly know the club without him The most of my patrons are boys sir and poetical boys who are not much company for me Not but what Malthy had some poetry too, but it was of a kind that I could understand

I can readily imagine you should find yourself in sympathy with Mr Malthus returned the Prince He struck me as a man of a very original disposition

The young man of the cream tarts was in the room but painfully depressed and silent His late companions sought in vain to lead him into conversation

How bitterly I wish he cried that I had never brought you to this infamous abode! Begone while you are clean handed If you could have heard the old man scream as he fell and the noise of his bones upon the pavement! Wish me if you have any kindness to so fallen a being—wish the ace of spades for me to night!

A few more members dropped in as the evening went on but the club did not muster more than the devil's dozen when they took their places at the table The Prince was again conscious of a certain joy in his alarms but he was astonished to see Geraldine so much more self possessed than on the night before

It is extraordinary thought the Prince that a will made or unmade should so greatly influence a young man's spirit

Attention gentlemen' said the President and he began to deal

Three times the cards went all round the table and neither of the marked cards had yet fallen from his hand The excitement as he began the fourth distribution was overwhelming There were just cards enough to go once more entirely round The Prince who sat second from the dealer's left would receive in the reverse mode of dealing practised at the club the second last card The third player turned up a black ace—it was the ace of clubs The next received a diamond the next a heart and so on but the ace of spades was still undelivered At last Geraldine who sat upon the Prince's left, turned his card, it was an ace but the ace of hearts

When Prince Florizel saw his fate upon the table in front of him his heart stood still He was a brave man but the sweat poured off his face There were exactly fifty chances out of a hundred that he was doomed He reversed the card it was the ace of spades A loud roaring filled his brain and the table swam before his eyes He heard the player on his right break into a fit of laughter that sounded between mirth and disappointment, he saw the com

pany rapidly dispersing but his mind was full of other thoughts He recognised how foolish how criminal had been his conduct In perfect health in the prime of his years the heir to a throne he had gambled away his future and that of a brave and loyal country God he cried God forgive me! And with that the confusion of his senses passed away and he regained his self possession in a moment

To his surprise Geraldine had disappeared There was no one in the card-room but his destined butcher consulting with the President and the young man with the cream tarts who slipped up to the Prince, and whispered in his ear —

I would give a million if I had it for your luck

His Highness could not help reflecting as the young man departed, that he would have sold his opportunity for a much more moderate sum

The whispered conference now came to an end The holder of the ace of clubs left the room with a look of intelligence and the President, approaching the unfortunate Prince proffered his hand

I am pleased to have met you sir said he and pleased to have been in a position to do you this trifling service At least you cannot complain of delay On the second evening—what a stroke of luck!

The Prince endeavoured in vain to articulate something in response, but his mouth was dry and his tongue seemed paralysed

'You feel a little sickish?' asked the President with some show of solicitude Most gentlemen do Will you take a little brandy?

The Prince signified in the affirmative and the other immediately filled some of the spirit into a tumbler

Poor old Malthy!' ejaculated the President as the Prince drained the glass He drank near upon a pint and little enough good it seemed to do him!

'I am more amenable to treatment said the Prince a good deal revived I am my own man again at once as you perceive And so let me ask you what are my directions?

'You will proceed along the Strand in the direction of the City on the left hand pavement until you meet the gentleman who has just left the room He will continue your instructions and him you will have the kindness to obey, the authority of the club is vested in his person for the night And now added the President I wish you a pleasant walk

Florizel acknowledged the salutation rather awkwardly, and took his leave He passed the smoking room where the bulk of the players were still consuming champagne some of which he had himself ordered and paid for and he was surprised to find himself cursing them in his heart He put on his hat and greatcoat in the cabinet and selected his umbrella from a corner The familiarity of these acts and the thought that he was about them for the last time betrayed him into a fit of laughter which sounded unpleasantly in his own ears He conceived a reluctance to leave the cabinet and turned instead to the window The sight of the lamps and the darkness recalled him to himself

Come, come, I must be a man he thought and tear myself away"

At the corner of Box Court three men fell upon Prince Florizel and he was unceremoniously thrust into a carriage, which at once drove rapidly away
There was already an occupant

Will your Highness pardon my zeal? said a well known voice
The Prince threw himself upon the Colonel's neck in a passion of relief
'How can I ever thank you?' he cried. And how was this effected?
Although he had been willing to march upon his doom he was overjoyed to yield to friendly violence and return once more to life and hope

You can thank me effectually enough replied the Colonel by avoiding all such dangers in the future And as for your second question all has been managed by the simplest means I arranged this afternoon with a celebrated detective Secrecy has been promised and paid for Your own servants have been principally engaged in the affair The house in Box Court has been surrounded since nightfall and this which is one of your own carriages, has been awaiting you for nearly an hour

And the miserable creature who was to have slain me—what of him? inquired the Prince

He was pinioned as he left the club replied the Colonel and now awaits your sentence at the Palace where he will soon be joined by his accomplices

Geraldine said the Prince you have saved me against my explicit orders, and you have done well I owe you not only my life but a lesson and I should be unworthy of my rank if I did not show myself grateful to my teacher Let it be ours to choose the manner

There was a pause during which the carriage continued to speed through the streets and the two men were each buried in his own reflections The silence was broken by Colonel Geraldine

Your Highness said he has by this time a considerable body of prisoners There is at least one criminal among the number to whom justice should be dealt Our oath forbids us all recourse to law and discretion would forbid it equally if the oath were loosened May I inquire your Highness's intention?

It is decided answered Florizel the President must fall in duel It only remains to choose his adversary

Your Highness has permitted me to name my own recompense said the Colonel Will he permit me to ask the appointment of my brother? It is an honourable post but I dare assure your Highness that the lad will acquit himself with credit

You ask me an ungracious favour said the Prince 'but I must refuse you nothing'

The Colonel kissed his hand with the greatest affection and at that moment the carriage rolled under the archway of the Prince's splendid residence

An hour after Florizel in his official robes and covered with all the orders of Bohemia received the members of the Suicide Club

Foolish and wicked men said he, as many of you as have been driven into this straight by the lack of fortune shall receive employment and remuneration from my officers Those who suffer under a sense of guilt must have recourse to a higher and more generous Potentate than I I feel pity for you

all deeper than you can imagine tomorrow you shall tell me your stories and as you answer more frankly I shall be the more able to remedy your mis fortunes As for you he added turning to the President I should only offend a person of your parts by any offer of assistance but I have instead a piece of diversion to propose to you Here laying his hand on the shoulder of Colonel Geraldine's young brother is an officer of mine who desires to make a little tour upon the Continent and I ask you as a favour to accompany him on this excursion Do you he went on changing his tone do you shoot well with the pistol? Because you may have need of that accomplishment When two men go travelling together it is best to be prepared for all Let me add that if by any chance you should lose young Mr Geraldine upon the way I shall always have another member of my household to place at your disposal and I am known Mr President to have long eyesight and as long an arm

With these words said with much sternness the Prince concluded his address Next morning the members of the club were suitably provided for by his munificence and the President set forth upon his travels under the supervision of Mr Geraldine and a pair of faithful and adroit lackeys well trained in the Prince's household Not content with this discreet agents were put in possession of the house in Box Court and all letters or visitors for the Suicide Club or its officials were to be examined by Prince Florizel in person

Here (says my Arabian author) ends THE STORY OF THE YOUNG MAN WITH THE CREAM TARTS, who is now a comfortable householder in Wigmore Street, Cavendish Square The number for obvious reasons, I suppress Those who care to pursue the adventures of Prince Florizel and the President of the Suicide Club, may read the HISTORY OF THE PHYSICIAN AND THE SARATOGA TRUNK

STORY OF THE PHYSICIAN AND THE SARATOGA TRUNK

MR SILAS Q SCUDDAMORE was a young American of a simple and harmless disposition which was the more to his credit as he came from New England—a quarter of the New World not precisely famous for those qualities Although he was exceedingly rich he kept a note of all his expenses in a little paper pocket book and he had chosen to study the attractions of Paris from the seventh story of what is called a furnished hotel in the Latin Quarter There was a great deal of habit in his penuriousness and his virtue which was very remarkable among his associates was principally founded upon diffidence and youth

The next room to his was inhabited by a lady very attractive in her air and very elegant in toilette whom on his first arrival he had taken for a Countess In course of time he had learned that she was known by the name of Madame Zephyrine and that whatever station she occupied in life it was not that of a person of title Madame Zephyrine, probably in the hope of enchanting the young American used to flaunt by him on the stairs with a

civil inclination a word of course and a knock down look out of her black eyes and disappear in a rustle of silk and with the revelation of an admirable foot and ankle But these advances so far from encouraging Mr Scuddamore plunged him into the depths of depression and bashfulness She had come to him several times for a light or to apologise for the imaginary depredations of her poodle but his mouth was closed in the presence of so superior a being his French promptly left him and he could only stare and stammer until she was gone The slenderness of their intercourse did not prevent him from throwing out insinuations of a very glorious order when he was safely alone with a few males

The room on the other side of the American s—for there were three rooms on a floor in the hotel—was tenanted by an old English physician of rather doubtful reputation Dr Noel for that was his name had been forced to leave London where he enjoyed a large and increasing practice and it was hinted that the police had been the instigators of this change of scene At least he who had made something of a figure in earlier life now dwelt in the Latin Quarter in great simplicity and solitude and devoted much of his time to study Mr Scuddamore had made his acquaintance and the pair would now and then dine together frugally in a restaurant across the street

Silas Q Scuddamore had many little vices of the more respectable order and was not restrained by delicacy from indulging them in many rather doubtful ways Chief among his foibles stood curiosity He was a born gossip and life and especially those parts of it in which he had no experience interested him to the degree of passion He was a pert invincible questioner pushing his inquiries with equal pertinency and indiscretion, he had been observed when he took a letter to the post to weigh it in his hand to turn it over and over and to study the address with care and when he found a flaw in the partition between his room and Madame Zephyrine's instead of filling it up he enlarged and improved the opening, and made use of it as a spy hole on his neighbour's affairs

One day in the end of March his curiosity growing as it was indulged, he enlarged the hole a little further so that he might command another corner of the room That evening when he went as usual to inspect Madame Zephyrine's movements he was astonished to find the aperture obscured in an odd manner on the other side and still more abashed when the obstacle was suddenly withdrawn and a titter of laughter reached his ears Some of the plaster had evidently betrayed the secret of his spy hole and his neighbour had been returning the compliment in kind Mr Scuddamore was moved to a very acute feeling of annoyance he condemned Madame Zephyrine unmercifully he even blamed himself but when he found next day that she had taken no means to baulk him of his favourite pastime he continued to profit by her carelessness and gratify his idle curiosity

That next day Madame Zephyrine received a long visit from a tall loosely built man of fifty or upwards whom Silas had not hitherto seen His tweed suit and coloured shirt no less than his shaggy side-whiskers identified him as a Britisher and his dull grey eye affected Silas with a sense of cold He

kept screwing his mouth from side to side and round and round during the whole colloquy which was carried on in whispers More than once it seemed to the young New Englander as if their gestures indicated his own apartment but the only thing definite he could gather by the most scrupulous attention was this remark made by the Englishman in a somewhat higher key, as if in answer to some reluctance or opposition

I have studied his taste to a nicety and I tell you again and again you are the only woman of the sort that I can lay my hands on

In answer to this Madame Zephyrine sighed and appeared by a gesture to resign herself like one yielding to unqualified authority

That afternoon the observatory was finally blinded a wardrobe having been drawn in front of it upon the other side and while Silas was still lamenting over this misfortune which he attributed to the Britisher's malign suggestion the concierge brought him up a letter in a female handwriting It was conceived in French of no very rigorous orthography bore no signature and in the most encouraging terms invited the young American to be present in a certain part of the Bullier Ball at eleven o'clock that night Curiosity and timidity fought a long battle in his heart, sometimes he was all virtue, sometimes all fire and daring and the result of it was that long before ten Mr Silas Q Scuddamore presented himself in unimpeachable attire at the door of the Bullier Ball Rooms and paid his entry money with a sense of reckless deviltry that was not without its charm

It was Carnival time and the Ball was very full and noisy The lights and the crowd at first rather abashed our young adventurer and then mounting to his brain with a sort of intoxication put him in possession of more than his own share of manhood He felt ready to face the devil and strutted in the ballroom with the swagger of a cavalier While he was thus parading he became aware of Madame Zephyrine and her Britisher in conference behind a pillar The cat like spirit of eavesdropping overcame him at once He stole nearer and nearer on the couple from behind until he was within earshot

'That is the man the Britisher was saying there—with the long blond hair—speaking to a girl in green

Silas identified a very handsome young fellow of small stature who was plainly the object of this designation

It is well said Madame Zephyrine I shall do my utmost But remember, the best of us may fail in such a matter

Tut' returned her companion, I answer for the result Have I not chosen you from thirty? Go but be wary of the Prince I cannot think what cursed accident has brought him here to night As if there were not a dozen balls in Paris better worth his notice than this riot of students and counter jumpers! See him where he sits more like a reigning Emperor at home than a Prince upon his holidays!

Silas was again lucky He observed a person of rather a full build strikingly handsome and of a very stately and courteous demeanour seated at table with another handsome young man several years his junior who addressed him with conspicuous deference The name of Prince struck grate

fully on Silas's Republican hearing and the aspect of the person to whom that name was applied exercised its usual charm upon his mind He left Madame Zephyrine and her Englishman to take care of each other and threading his way through the assembly approached the table which the Prince and his confidant had honoured with their choice

I tell you Geraldine the former was saying 'the action is madness Yourself (I am glad to remember it) chose your brother for this perilous service and you are bound in duty to have a guard upon his conduct He has consented to delay so many days in Paris that was already an imprudence considering the character of the man he has to deal with but now, when he is within eight and forty hours of his departure when he is within two or three days of the decisive trial I ask you is this a place for him to spend his time? He should be in a gallery at practice he should be sleeping long hours and taking moderate exercise on foot he should be on a rigorous diet without white wines or brandy Does the dog imagine we are all playing comedy? The thing is deadly earnest Geraldine

'I know the lad too well to interfere replied Colonel Geraldine and well enough not to be alarmed He is more cautious than you fancy and of an indomitable spirit If it had been a woman I should not say so much, but I trust the President to him and the two valets without an instant's apprehension

I am gratified to hear you say so replied the Prince but my mind is not at rest These servants are well trained spies and already has not this miscreant succeeded three times in eluding their observation and spending several hours on end in private and most likely dangerous affairs? An amateur might have lost him by accident but if Rudolph and Jerome were thrown off the scent it must have been done on purpose and by a man who had a cogent reason and exceptional resources

I believe the question is now one between my brother and myself replied Geraldine with a shade of offence in his tone

I permit it to be so Colonel Geraldine returned Prince Florizel Perhaps for that very reason you should be all the more ready to accept my counsels But enough That girl in yellow dances well

And then talk veered into the ordinary topics of a Paris ballroom in the Carnival

Silas remembered where he was and that the hour was already near at hand when he ought to be upon the scene of his assignation The more he reflected the less he liked the prospect and as at that moment an eddy in the crowd began to draw him in the direction of the door he suffered it to carry him away without resistance The eddy stranded him in a corner under the gallery where his ear was immediately struck with the voice of Madame Zephyrine She was speaking in French with the young man of the blond locks who had been pointed out by the strange Britisher not half an hour before

I have a character at stake she said or I would put no other condition than my heart recommends But you have only to say so much to the porter and he will let you go by without a word

'But why this talk of debt?' objected her companion
 Heavens' said she 'do you think I do not understand my own hotel?'
 And she went by clinging affectionately to her companion's arm
 This put Silas in mind of his billet

Ten minutes hence thought he 'and I may be walking with as beautiful a woman as that and even better dressed—perhaps a real lady possibly a woman of title'

And then he remembered the spelling and was a little downcast

But it may have been written by her maid he imagined

The clock was only a few minutes from the hour and this immediate proximity set his heart beating at a curious and rather disagreeable speed. He reflected with relief that he was in no way bound to put in an appearance. Virtue and cowardice were together and he made once more for the door but this time of his own accord and battling against the stream of people who was now moving in a contrary direction. Perhaps this prolonged resistance wearied him or perhaps he was in that frame of mind when merely to continue in the same determination for a certain number of minutes produces a reaction and a different purpose. Certainly at least he wheeled about for a third time and did not stop until he had found a place of concealment within a few yards of the appointed place.

Here he went through an agony of spirit in which he several times prayed to God for help for Silas had been devoutly educated. He had now not the least inclination for the meeting nothing kept him from flight but a silly fear lest he should be thought unmanly but this was so powerful that it kept head against all other motives and although it could not decide him to advance prevented him from definitely running away. At last the clock indicated ten minutes past the hour. Young Scuddamore's spirit began to rise he peered round the corner and saw no one at the place of meeting. Doubtless his unknown correspondent had wearied and gone away. He became as bold as he had formerly been timid. It seemed to him that if he came at all to the appointment however late he was clear from the charge of cowardice. Nay now he began to suspect a hoax and actually complimented himself on his shrewdness in having suspected and out manœuvred his mystifiers. So very idle a thing is a body's mind!

Armed with these reflections he advanced boldly from his corner but he had not taken above a couple of steps before a hand was laid upon his arm. He turned and beheld a lady cast in a very large mould and with somewhat stately features but bearing no mark of severity in her looks.

I see that you are a very self confident lady killer said she 'for you make yourself expected. But I was determined to meet you. When a woman has once so far forgotten herself as to make a first advance she has long ago left behind her all considerations of petty pride.'

Silas was overwhelmed by the size and attractions of his correspondent and the suddenness with which she had fallen upon him. But she soon set him at his ease. She was very towardly and lenient in her behaviour, she led him on to make pleasantries and then applauded him to the echo and in a very

short time between blandishments and a liberal exhibition of warm brandy she had not only induced him to fancy himself in love but to declare his passion with the greatest vehemence

Alas' she said I do not know whether I ought not to deplore this moment great as is the pleasure you give me by your words Hitherto I was alone to suffer now poor boy there will be two I am not my own mistress I dare not ask you to visit me at my own house for I am watched by jealous eyes Let me see she added I am older than you although so much weaker, and while I trust in your courage and determination I must employ my own knowledge of the world for our mutual benefit Where do you live?

He told her that he lodged in a furnished hotel and named the street and number

She seemed to reflect for some minutes with an effort of mind

I see she said at last You will be faithful and obedient will you not?" Silas assured her eagerly of his fidelity

To morrow night then she continued with an encouraging smile you must remain at home all the evening and if any friends should visit you, dismiss them at once on any pretext that most readily presents itself Your door is probably shut by ten? she asked

By eleven answered Silas

At a quarter past eleven pursued the lady leave the house Merely cry for the door to be opened and be sure you fall into no talk with the porter as that might ruin everything Go straight to the corner where the Luxembourg Gardens join the Boulevard there you will find me waiting you I trust you to follow my advice from point to point and remember if you fail me in only one particular you will bring the sharpest trouble on a woman whose only fault is to have seen and loved you

I cannot see the use of all these instructions said Silas

I believe you are already beginning to treat me as a master she cried tapping him with her fan upon the arm Patience patience! that should come in time A woman loves to be obeyed at first although afterwards she finds her pleasure in obeying Do as I ask you for Heaven's sake or I will answer for nothing Indeed now I think of it she added with the manner of one who has just seen further into a difficulty I find a better plan of keeping importune visitors away Tell the porter to admit no one for you, except a person who may come that night to claim a debt and speak with some feeling as though you feared the interview so that he may take your words in earnest

I think you may trust me to protect myself against intruders he said not without a little pique

That is how I should prefer the thing arranged she answered coldly I know you men, you think nothing of a woman's reputation

Silas blushed and somewhat hung his head, for the scheme he had in view had involved a little vain glorying before his acquaintances

Above all she added do not speak to the porter as you come out'

And why? said he Of all your instructions that seems to me the least important

You at first doubted the wisdom of some of the others which you now see to be very necessary she replied Believe me this also has its uses in time you will see them and what am I to think of your affection, if you refuse me such trifles at our first interview?

Silas confounded himself in explanations and apologies in the middle of these she looked up at the clock and clapped her hands together with a suppressed scream

Heavens! she cried, is it so late? I have not an instant to lose Alas we poor women what slaves we are! What have I not risked for you already?

And after repeating her directions which she artfully combined with caresses and the most abandoned looks she bade him farewell and disappeared among the crowd

The whole of the next day Silas was filled with a sense of great importance, he was now sure she was a countess and when evening came he minutely obeyed her orders and was at the corner of the Luxembourg Gardens by the hour appointed No one was there He waited nearly half an hour looking in the face of every one who passed or loitered near the spot he even visited the neighbouring corners of the Boulevard and made a complete circuit of the garden railings but there was no beautiful countess to throw herself into his arms At last and most reluctantly he began to retrace his steps towards his hotel On the way he remembered the words he had heard pass between Madame Zephyrine and the blond young man and they gave him an indefinite uneasiness

'It appears he reflected that every one has to tell lies to our porter He rang the bell the door opened before him and the porter in his bed-clothes came to offer him a light

Has he gone? inquired the porter

He? Whom do you mean? asked Silas, somewhat sharply for he was irritated by his disappointment

I did not notice him go out continued the porter but I trust you paid him We do not care in this house to have lodgers who cannot meet their liabilities'

What the devil do you mean? demanded Silas rudely I cannot understand a word of this farrago

The short blond young man who came for his debt returned the other 'Him it is I mean Who else should it be when I had your orders to admit no one else?

Why good God of course he never came retorted Silas

I believe what I believe returned the porter putting his tongue into his cheek with a most roguish air

You are an insolent scoundrel," cried Silas and feeling that he had made a ridiculous exhibition of asperity, and at the same time bewildered by a dozen alarms he turned and began to run upstairs

Do you not want a light then? cried the porter

But Silas only hurried the faster and did not pause until he had reached the seventh landing and stood in front of his own door There he waited a mo

ment to recover his breath assailed by the worst forebodings and almost dreading to enter the room

When at last he did so he was relieved to find it dark and to all appearance untenanted He drew a long breath Here he was home again in safety and this should be his last folly as certainly as it had been his first The matches stood on a little table by the bed and he began to grope his way in that direction As he moved his apprehensions grew upon him once more and he was pleased when his foot encountered an obstacle to find it nothing more alarming than a chair At last he touched curtains From the position of the window which was faintly visible he knew he must be at the foot of the bed and had only to feel his way along it in order to reach the table in question

He lowered his hand but what it touched was not simply a counterpane—it was a counterpane with something underneath it like the outline of a human leg Silas withdrew his arm and stood a moment petrified

What what he thought can this betoken?

He listened intently but there was no sound of breathing Once more with a great effort, he reached out the end of his finger to the spot he had already touched but this time he leaped back half a yard and stood shivering and fixed with terror There was something in his bed What it was he knew not but there was something there

It was some seconds before he could move Then guided by an instinct he fell straight upon the matches and keeping his back towards the bed lighted a candle As soon as the flame had kindled he turned slowly round and looked for what he feared to see Sure enough there was the worst of his imaginations realised The coverlid was drawn carefully up over the pillow but it moulded the outline of a human body lying motionless and when he dashed forward and flung aside the sheets he beheld the blond young man whom he had seen in the Bullier Ball the night before his eyes open and without speculation his face swollen and blackened and a thin stream of blood trickling from his nostrils

Silas uttered a long, tremulous wail dropped the candle and fell on his knees beside the bed

Silas was awakened from the stupor into which his terrible discovery had plunged him by a prolonged but discreet tapping at the door It took him some seconds to remember his position and when he hastened to prevent any one from entering it was already too late Dr Noel in a tall nightcap carrying a lamp which lighted up his long white countenance sidling in his gait and peering and cocking his head like some sort of bird pushed the door slowly open and advanced into the middle of the room

I thought I heard a cry began the Doctor, and fearing you might be unwell I did not hesitate to offer this intrusion

Silas with a flushed face and a fearful beating heart kept between the Doctor and the bed but he found no voice to answer

You are in the dark pursued the Doctor and yet you have not even begun to prepare for rest You will not easily persuade me against my own eyesight and your face declares most eloquently that you require either a friend

or a physician—which is it to be? Let me feel your pulse, for that is often a just reporter of the heart

He advanced to Silas who still retreated before him backwards and sought to take him by the wrist but the strain on the young American's nerves had become too great for endurance He avoided the Doctor with a febrile movement and throwing himself upon the floor burst into a flood of weeping

As soon as Dr Noel perceived the dead man in the bed his face darkened and hurrying back to the door which he had left ajar he hastily closed and double locked it

Up! he cried addressing Silas in strident tones this is no time for weeping What have you done? How came this body in your room? Speak freely to one who may be helpful Do you imagine I would ruin you? Do you think this piece of dead flesh on your pillow can alter in any degree the sympathy with which you have inspired me? Credulous youth, the horror with which blind and unjust law regards an action never attaches to the doer in the eyes of those who love him and if I saw the friend of my heart return to me out of seas of blood he would be in no way changed in my affection Raise yourself he said good and ill are a chimera there is nought in life except destiny and however you may be circumstanced there is one at your side who will help you to the last

Thus encouraged Silas gathered himself together and in a broken voice and helped out by the Doctor's interrogations contrived at last to put him in possession of the facts But the conversation between the Prince and Geraldine he altogether omitted as he had understood little of its purport and had no idea that it was in any way related to his own misadventure

Alas! cried Dr Noel I am much abused or you have fallen innocently into the most dangerous hands in Europe Poor boy what a pit has been dug for your simplicity! into what a deadly peril have your unwary feet been conducted! This man he said this Englishman whom you twice saw and whom I suspect to be the soul of the contrivance can you describe him? Was he young or old? tall or short?

But Silas who for all his curiosity, had not a seeing eye in his head was able to supply nothing but meagre generalities which it was impossible to recognise

I would have it a piece of education in all schools! cried the Doctor angrily Where is the use of eyesight and articulate speech if a man cannot observe and recollect the features of his enemy? I who know all the gangs of Europe might have identified him and gained new weapons for your defence Cultivate this art in future my poor boy, you may find it of momentous service

The future! repeated Silas What future is there left for me except the gallows?

Youth is but a cowardly season" returned the Doctor and a man's own troubles look blacker than they are I am old and yet I never despair

Can I tell such a story to the police? demanded Silas

Assuredly not replied the Doctor From what I see already of the machi

nation in which you have been involved your case is desperate upon that side and for the narrow eye of the authorities you are infallibly the guilty person And remember that we only know a portion of the plot and the same in famous contrivers have doubtless arranged many other circumstances which would be elicited by a police inquiry, and help to fix the guilt more certainly upon your innocence

I am then lost indeed! cried Silas

I have not said so answered Dr Noel for I am a cautious man

But look at this! objected Silas pointing to the body Here is this object in my bed not to be explained not to be disposed of not to be regarded without horror

Horror! replied the Doctor No When this sort of clock has run down it is no more to me than an ingenious piece of mechanism to be investigated with the bistoury When blood is once cold and stagnant it is no longer human blood when flesh is once dead it is no longer that flesh which we desire in our lovers and respect in our friends The grace the attraction the terror have all gone from it with the animating spirit Accustom yourself to look upon it with composure for if my scheme is practicable you will have to live some days in constant proximity to that which now so greatly horrifies you

Your scheme! cried Silas What is that? Tell me speedily Doctor, for I have scarcely courage enough to continue to exist

Without replying Doctor Noel turned towards the bed and proceeded to examine the corpse

Quite dead he murmured Yes as I had supposed the pockets empty Yes and the name cut off the shirt Their work has been done thoroughly and well Fortunately he is of small stature

Silas followed these words with an extreme anxiety At last the Doctor his autopsy completed took a chair and addressed the young American with a smile

Since I came into your room said he although my ears and my tongue have been so busy I have not suffered my eyes to remain idle I noted a little while ago that you have there in the corner one of those monstrous constructions which your fellow countrymen carry with them into all quarters of the globe—in a word a Saratoga trunk Until this moment I have never been able to conceive the utility of these erections but then I began to have a glimmer Whether it was for convenience in the slave trade or to obviate the results of too ready an employment of the bowie knife I cannot bring myself to decide But one thing I see plainly—the object of such a box is to contain a human body

Surely! cried Silas 'surely this is not a time for jesting

Although I may express myself with some degree of pleasantry replied the Doctor the purport of my words is entirely serious And the first thing we have to do my young friend is to empty your coffer of all that it contains

Silas obeying the authority of Doctor Noel put himself at his disposition The Saratoga trunk was soon gutted of its contents, which made a considerable

litter on the floor, and then—Silas taking the heels and the Doctor supporting the shoulders—the body of the murdered man was carried from the bed and after some difficulty doubled up and inserted whole into the empty box With an effort on the part of both the lid was forced down upon this unusual baggage and the trunk was locked and corded by the Doctor's own hand while Silas disposed of what had been taken out between the closet and a chesⁿ of drawers

Now said the Doctor the first step has been taken on the way to your deliverance To morrow or rather today it must be your task to allay the suspicions of your porter paying him all that you owe while you may trust me to make the arrangements necessary to a safe conclusion Meantime, follow me to my room where I shall give you a safe and powerful opiate for whatever you do you must have rest

The next day was the longest in Silas's memory it seemed as if it would never be done He denied himself to his friends and sat in a corner with his eyes fixed upon the Saratoga trunk in dismal contemplation His own former indiscretions were now returned upon him in kind for the observatory had been once more opened and he was conscious of an almost continued study from Madame Zephyrine's apartment So distressing did this become that he was at last obliged to block up the spy hole from his own side and when he was thus secured from observation he spent a considerable portion of his time in contrite tears and prayer

Late in the evening Dr Noel entered the room carrying in his hand a pair of sealed envelopes without address one somewhat bulky and the other so slim as to seem without enclosure

Silas he said seating himself at the table the time has now come for me to explain my plan for your salvation To-morrow morning at an early hour Prince Florizel of Bohemia returns to London after having diverted himself for a few days with the Parisian Carnival It was my fortune a good while ago to do Colonel Geraldine his Master of the Horse one of those services so common in my profession which are never forgotten upon either side I have no need to explain to you the nature of the obligation under which he was laid suffice it to say that I knew him ready to serve me in any practicable manner Now it was necessary for you to gain London with your trunk unopened To this the Custom House seemed to oppose a fatal difficulty but I bethought me that the baggage of so considerable a person as the Prince is as a matter of courtesy passed without examination by the officers of Custom I applied to Colonel Geraldine and succeeded in obtaining a favourable answer To morrow if you go before six to the hotel where the Prince lodges your baggage will be passed over as a part of his and you yourself will make the journey as a member of his suite

It seems to me as you speak that I have already seen both the Prince and Colonel Geraldine, I even overheard some of their conversation the other evening at the Bullier Ball

It is probable enough for the Prince loves to mix with all societies re plied the Doctor Once arrived in London he pursued, your task is nearly

ended In this more bulky envelope I have given you a letter which I dare not address but in the other you will find the designation of the house to which you must carry it along with your box, which will there be taken from you and not trouble you any more

Alas' said Silas I have every wish to believe you but how is it possible? You open up to me a bright prospect but I ask you is my mind capable of receiving so unlikely a solution? Be more generous and let me further understand your meaning

The Doctor seemed painfully impressed

Boy he answered 'you do not know how hard a thing you ask me But be it so I am now inured to humiliation and it would be strange if I refused you this after having granted you so much Know then that although I now make so quiet an appearance—frugal solitary addicted to study—when I was younger my name was once a rallying cry among the most astute and dangerous spirits of London and while I was outwardly an object for respect and consideration my true power resided in the most secret terrible and criminal relations It is to one of the persons who then obeyed me that I now address myself to deliver you from your burden They were men of many different nations and dexter ties all bound together by a formidable oath and working to the same purposes the trade of the association was in murder and I who speak to you innocent as I appear was the chieftain of this redoubtable crew

'What? cried Silas A murderer? And one with whom murder was a trade? Can I take your hand? Ought I so much as to accept your services? Dark and criminal old man, would you make an accomplice of my youth and my distress?

The Doctor bitterly laughed

You are difficult to please Mr Scuddamore said he but I now offer your choice of company between the murdered man and the murderer If your conscience is too nice to accept my aid say so and I will immediately leave you Thenceforward you can deal with your trunk and its belongings as best suits your upright conscience

I own myself wrong replied Silas I should have remembered how generously you offered to shield me even before I had convinced you of my innocence and I continue to listen to your counsels with gratitude

That is well returned the Doctor and I perceive you are beginning to learn some of the lessons of experience

At the same time resumed the New Englander as you confess yourself accustomed to this tragic business you and the people to whom you recommend me are your own former associates and friends could you not yourself undertake the transport of the box and rid at once of its detested presence?

Upon my word replied the Doctor I admire you cordially If you do not think I have already meddled sufficiently in your concerns believe me from my heart I think the contrary Take or leave my services as I offer them and trouble me with no more words of gratitude for I value your consideration even more lightly than I do your intellect A time will come if you should be spared to see a number of years in health and mind when

you will think differently of all this and blush for your to-night's behaviour

So saying the Doctor arose from his chair repeated his directions briefly and clearly and departed from the room without permitting Silas any time to answer

The next morning Silas presented himself at the hotel where he was politely received by Colonel Geraldine and relieved from that moment of all immediate alarm about his trunk and its grisly contents The journey passed over without much incident although the young man was horrified to overhear the sailors and railway porters complaining among themselves about the unusual weight of the Prince's baggage Silas travelled in a carriage with the valets for Prince Florizel chose to be alone with his Master of the Horse On board the steamer however Silas attracted his Highness's attention by the melancholy of his air and attitude as he stood gazing at the pile of baggage, for he was still full of disquietude about the future

There is a young man observed the Prince who must have some cause for sorrow

'That replied Geraldine is the American for whom I obtained permission to travel with your suite

You remind me that I have been remiss in courtesy said Prince Florizel and advancing to Silas he addressed him with the most exquisite condescension in these words —

I was charmed young sir to be able to gratify the desire you made known to me through Colonel Geraldine Remember if you please that I shall be glad at any future time to lay you under a more serious obligation

And he then put some questions as to the political condition of America which Silas answered with sense and propriety

You are still a young man said the Prince but I observe you to be very serious for your years Perhaps you allow your attention to be too much occupied with grave studies But perhaps on the other hand I am myself indiscreet and touch upon a painful subject

I have certainly cause to be the most miserable of men said Silas never has a more innocent person been more dismally abused

I will not ask you for your confidence returned Prince Florizel 'But do not forget Colonel Geraldine's recommendation is an unfailing passport and that I am not only willing but possibly more able than many others to do you a service'

Silas was delighted with the amiability of this great personage but his mind soon returned upon its gloomy preoccupations for not even the favour of a Prince to a Republican can discharge a brooding spirit of its cares

The train arrived at Charing Cross where the officers of the Revenue respected the baggage of Prince Florizel in the usual manner The most elegant equipages were in waiting and Silas was driven along with the rest to the Prince's residence There Colonel Geraldine sought him out and expressed himself pleased to have been of any service to a friend of the physician's, for whom he professed a great consideration

'I hope he added that you will find none of your porcelain injured

Special orders were given along the line to deal tenderly with the Prince's effects

And then directing the servants to place one of the carriages at the young gentleman's disposal and at once to charge the Saratoga trunk upon the dickey the Colonel shook hands and excused himself on account of his occupations in the princely household

Silas now broke the seal of the envelope containing the address and directed the stately footman to drive him to Box Court, opening off the Strand It seemed as if the place were not at all unknown to the man for he looked startled and begged a repetition of the order It was with a heart full of alarms, that Silas mounted into the luxurious vehicle, and was driven to his destination The entrance to Box Court was too narrow for the passage of a coach it was a mere footway between railings with a post at either end On one of these posts was seated a man who at once jumped down and exchanged a friendly sign with the driver, while the footman opened the door and inquired of Silas whether he should take down the Saratoga trunk and to what number it should be carried

"If you please," said Silas To number three

The foreman and the man who had been sitting on the post even with the aid of Silas himself, had hard work to carry in the trunk and before it was deposited at the door of the house in question the young American was horrified to find a score of loiterers looking on But he knocked with as good a countenance as he could muster up and presented the other envelope to him who opened

He is not at home said he, but if you will leave your letter and return to morrow early, I shall be able to inform you whether and when he can receive your visit Would you like to leave your box? he added

Dearly cried Silas and the next moment he repented his precipitation, and declared, with equal emphasis, that he would rather carry the box along with him to the hotel

The crowd jeered at his indecision and followed him to the carriage with insulting remarks, and Silas covered with shame and terror implored the servants to conduct him to some quiet and comfortable house of entertainment in the immediate neighbourhood

The Prince's equipage deposited Silas at the Craven Hotel in Craven Street, and immediately drove away leaving him alone with the servants of the inn The only vacant room it appeared was a little den up four pairs of stairs and looking towards the back To this hermitage with infinite trouble and complaint, a pair of stout porters carried the Saratoga trunk It is needless to mention that Silas kept closely at their heels throughout the ascent and had his heart in his mouth at every corner A single false step he reflected and the box might go over the banisters and land its fatal contents plainly discovered, on the pavement of the hall

Arrived in the room, he sat down on the edge of his bed to recover from the agony that he had just endured, but he had hardly taken his position when he was recalled to a sense of his peril by the action of the boots, who had

knelt beside the trunk, and was proceeding officiously to undo its elaborate fastenings

'Let it be!' cried Silas 'I shall want nothing from it while I stay here'

'You might have let it lie in the hall then' growled the man 'a thing as big and heavy as a church. What you have inside I cannot fancy. If it is all money you are a richer man than me.'

'Money?' repeated Silas in a sudden perturbation. 'What do you mean by money? I have no money and you are speaking like a fool.'

'All right captain' retorted the boots with a wink. 'There's nobody will touch your lordship's money. I'm as safe as the bank,' he added, 'but as the box is heavy I shouldn't mind drinking something to your lordship's health.'

Silas pressed two Napoleons upon his acceptance, apologising at the same time for being obliged to trouble him with foreign money, and pleading his recent arrival for excuse. And the man grumbling with even greater fervour and looking contemptuously from the money in his hand to the Saratoga trunk and back again from the one to the other at last consented to withdraw.

For nearly two days the dead body had been packed into Silas's box and as soon as he was alone the unfortunate New Englander nosed all the cracks and openings with the most passionate attention. But the weather was cool and the trunk still managed to contain his shocking secret.

He took a chair beside it and buried his face in his hands and his mind in the most profound reflection. If he were not speedily relieved no question but he must be speedily discovered. Alone in a strange city without friends or accomplices if the Doctor's introduction failed him he was indubitably a lost New Englander. He reflected pathetically over his ambitious designs for the future he should not now become the hero and spokesman of his native place of Bangor, Maine; he should not as he had fondly anticipated move on from office to office from honour to honour he might as well divest himself at once of all hope of being acclaimed President of the United States and leaving behind him a statue in the worst possible style of art to adorn the Capitol at Washington. Here he was chained to a dead Englishman doubled up inside a Saratoga trunk, whom he must get rid of or perish from the rolls of national glory!

I should be afraid to chronicle the language employed by this young man to the Doctor to the murdered man to Madame Zephyrine to the boots of the hotel to the Prince's servants and in a word to all who had been ever so remotely connected with his horrible misfortune.

He slunk down to dinner about seven at night but the yellow coffee-room appalled him the eyes of the other diners seemed to rest on him with suspicion and his mind remained upstairs with the Saratoga trunk. When the waiter came to offer him cheese his nerves were already so much on edge that he leaped half way out of his chair and upset the remainder of a pint of ale upon the tablecloth.

The fellow offered to show him to the smoking room when he had done and although he would have much preferred to return at once to his perilous treasure he had not the courage to refuse and was shown downstairs to the

black gas lit cellar, which formed, and possibly still forms the divan of the Craven Hotel

Two very sad betting men were playing billiards attended by a moist consumptive marker and for the moment Silas imagined that these were the only occupants of the apartment But at the next glance his eyes fell upon a person smoking in the farthest corner with lowered eye and a most respectable and modest aspect He knew at once that he had seen the face before and in spite of the entire change of clothes recognised the man whom he had found seated on a post at the entrance to Box Court and who had helped him to carry the trunk to and from the carriage The New Englander simply turned and ran nor did he pause until he had locked and bolted himself into his bedroom

There, all night long a prey to the most terrible imaginations he watched beside the fatal boxful of dead flesh The suggestion of the boots that his trunk was full of gold inspired him with all manner of new terrors if he so much as dared to close an eye, and the presence in the smoking room, and under an obvious disguise of the loiterer from Box Court convinced him that he was once more the centre of obscure machinations

Midnight had sounded some time when impelled by uneasy suspicions Silas opened his bedroom door and peered into the passage It was dimly illuminated by a single jet of gas, and some distance off he perceived a man sleeping on the floor in the costume of an hotel under servant Silas drew near the man on tiptoe He lay partly on his back, partly on his side and his right forearm concealed his face from recognition Suddenly while the American was still bending over him the sleeper removed his arm and opened his eyes and Silas found himself once more face to face with the loiterer of Box Court

Good-night sir ' said the man pleasantly

But Silas was too profoundly moved to find an answer and regained his room in silence

Towards morning worn out by apprehension he fell asleep on his chair with his head forward on the trunk In spite of so constrained an attitude and such a grisly pillow his slumber was sound and prolonged and he was only awakened at a late hour and by a sharp tapping at the door

He hurried to open and found the boots without

You are the gentleman who called yesterday at Box Court? he asked Silas with a quaver admitted that he had done so

Then this note is for you added the servant proffering a sealed envelope Silas tore it open, and found inside the words "Twelve o'clock"

He was punctual to the hour, the trunk was carried before him by several stout servants and he was himself ushered into a room where a man sat warming himself before the fire with his back towards the door The sound of so many persons entering and eaving and the scraping of the trunk as it was deposited upon the bare boards were alike unable to attract the notice of the occupant and Silas stood waiting in an agony of fear, until he should deign to recognise his presence

Perhaps five minutes had elapsed before the man turned leisurely about, and disclosed the features of Prince Florizel of Bohemia

So sir he said with great severity this is the manner in which you abuse my politeness You join yourself to persons of condition, I perceive for no other purpose than to escape the consequences of your crimes and I can readily understand your embarrassment when I addressed myself to you yesterday

Indeed' cried Silas I am innocent of everything except misfortune

And in a hurried voice and with the greatest ingenuousness he recounted to the Prince the whole history of his calamity

I see I have been mistaken said his Highness when he had heard him to an end You are no other than a victim and since I am not to punish you may be sure I shall do my utmost to help And now he continued to business Open your box at once and let me see what it contains

Silas changed colour

I almost fear to look upon it he exclaimed

'Nay replied the Prince have you not looked at it already? This is a form of sentimentality to be resisted The sight of a sick man whom we can still help should appeal more directly to the feelings than that of a dead man who is equally beyond help or harm love or hatred Nerve yourself Mr Scuddamore and then seeing that Silas still hesitated I do not desire to give another name to my request he added

The young American awoke as if out of a dream and with a shiver of repugnance addressed himself to loose the straps and open the lock of the Saratoga trunk The Prince stood by watching with a composed countenance and his hands behind his back The body was quite stiff and it cost Silas a great effort both moral and physical to dislodge it from its position and discover the face

Prince Florizel started back with an exclamation of painful surprise

Alas! he cried you little know Mr Scuddamore what a cruel gift you have brought me This is a young man of my own suite the brother of my trusted friend and it was upon matters of my own service that he has thus perished at the hands of violent and treacherous men Poor Geraldine he went on as if to himself in what words am I to tell you of your brother's fate? How can I excuse myself in your eyes or in the eyes of God for the presumptuous schemes that led him to this bloody and unnatural death? Ah Florizel! Florizel! when will you learn the discretion that suits mortal life and be no longer dazzled with the image of power at your disposal? Power! he cried who is more powerless? I look upon this young man whom I have sacrificed Mr Scuddamore and feel how small a thing it is to be a Prince

Silas was moved at the sight of his emotion He tried to murmur some consolatory words and burst into tears The Prince touched by his obvious intention came up to him and took him by the hand

Command yourself said he We have both much to learn, and we shall both be better men for to day's meeting

Silas thanked him in silence with an affectionate look

Write me the address of Doctor Noel on this piece of paper' continued the Prince leading him towards the table 'and let me recommend you when you are again in Paris to avoid the society of that dangerous man He has acted in this matter on a generous inspiration that I must believe had he been privy to young Geraldine's death he would never have despatched the body to the care of the actual criminal

The actual criminal' repeated Silas in astonishment

Even so returned the Prince The letter which the disposition of Al mighty Providence has so strangely delivered into my hands was addressed to no less a personage than the criminal himself the infamous President of the Suicide Club Seek to pry no further in these perilous affairs but content yourself with your own escape and leave this house at once I have pressing affairs and must arrange at once about this poor clay which was so lately a gallant and handsome youth

Silas took a grateful and submissive leave of Prince Florizel but he lingered in Box Court until he saw him depart in a splendid carriage on a visit to Colonel Henderson of the police Republican as he was the young American took off his hat with almost a sentiment of devotion to the retreating carriage And the same night he started by rail on his return to Paris

Here (observes my Arabian author) is the end of THE HISTORY OF THE PHYSICIAN AND THE SARATOGA TRUNK Omitting some reflections on the power of Providence, highly pertinent in the original, but little suited to our occidental taste, I shall only add that Mr Scuddamore has already begun to mount the ladder of political fame, and by last advices was the Sheriff of his native town

THE ADVENTURE OF THE HANSOM CABS

LIEUTENANT BRACKENBURY RICH had greatly distinguished himself in one of the lesser Indian hill wars He it was who took the chieftain prisoner with his own hand his gallantry was universally applauded and when he came home prostrated by an ugly sabre cut and a protracted jungle fever society was prepared to welcome the Lieutenant as a celebrity of minor lustre But his was a character remarkable for unaffected modesty adventure was dear to his heart, but he cared little for adulation, and he waited at foreign watering places and in Algiers until the fame of his exploits had run through its nine days vitality and begun to be forgotten He arrived in London at last in the early season, with as little observation as he could desire and as he was an orphan and had none but distant relatives who lived in the provinces it was almost as a foreigner that he installed himself in the capital of the country for which he had shed his blood

On the day following his arrival he dined alone at a military club He shook hands with a few old comrades and received their warm congratulations but as one and all had some engagement for the evening he found himself left

entirely to his own resources He was in evening dress for he had entertained the notion of visiting a theatre But the great city was new to him he had gone from a provincial school to a military college and thence direct to the Eastern Empire and he promised himself a variety of delights in this world for exploration Swinging his cane he took his way westward It was a mild evening already dark and now and then threatening rain The succession of faces in the lamplight stirred the Lieutenant's imagination and it seemed to him as if he could walk for ever in that stimulating city atmosphere and surrounded by the mystery of four million private lives He glanced at the houses and marvelled what was passing behind those warmly lighted windows he looked into face after face and saw them each intent upon some unknown interest criminal or kindly

They talk of war, he thought but this is the great battlefield of man kind

And then he began to wonder that he should walk so long in this complicated scene and not chance upon so much as the shadow of an adventure for himself

All in good time he reflected I am still a stranger and perhaps wear a strange air But I must be drawn into the eddy before long

The night was already well advanced when a plump of cold rain fell suddenly out of the darkness Brackenbury paused under some trees and as he did so he caught sight of a hansom cabman making him a sign that he was disengaged The circumstance fell in so happily to the occasion that he at once raised his cane in answer and had soon ensconced himself in the London gondola

Where to sir? asked the driver

Where you please said Brackenbury

And immediately at a pace of surprising swiftness the hansom drove off through the rain into a maze of villas One villa was so like another each with its front garden and there was so little to distinguish the deserted lamp-lit streets and crescents through which the flying hansom took its way that Brackenbury soon lost all idea of direction He would have been tempted to believe that the cabman was amusing himself by driving him round and round and in and out about a small quarter but there was something business like in the speed which convinced him of the contrary The man had an object in view he was hastening towards a definite end, and Brackenbury was at once astonished at the fellow's skill in picking through such a labyrinth and a little concerned to imagine what was the occasion of his hurry He had heard tales of strangers falling ill in London Did the driver belong to some bloody and treacherous association? and was he himself being whirled to a murderous death?

The thought had scarcely presented itself, when the cab swung sharply round a corner and pulled up before the garden gate of a villa in a long and wide road The house was brilliantly lighted up Another hansom had just driven away and Brackenbury could see a gentleman being admitted at the front door and received by several liveried servants He was surprised that the

cabman should have stopped so immediately in front of a house where a reception was being held but he did not doubt it was the result of accident and sat placidly smoking where he was until he heard the trap thrown open over his head

Here we are sir said the driver

Here! repeated Brackenbury Where?

You told me to take you where I pleased sir returned the man with a chuckle and here we are

It struck Brackenbury that the voice was wonderfully smooth and courteous for a man in so inferior a position he remembered the speed at which he had been driven and now it occurred to him that the hansom was more luxuriously appointed than the common run of public conveyances

I must ask you to explain said he Do you mean to turn me out into the rain? My good man I suspect the choice is mine

The choice is certainly yours replied the driver but when I tell you all I believe I know how a gentleman of your figure will decide There is a gentleman's party in this house I do not know whether the master be a stranger to London and without acquaintances of his own, or whether he is a man of odd notions But certainly I was hired to kidnap single gentlemen in evening dress as many as I pleased but military officers by preference You have simply to go in and say that Mr Morris invited you

Are you Mr Morris? inquired the Lieutenant

Oh no replied the cabman Mr Morris is the person of the house

"It is not a common way of collecting guests said Brackenbury, but an eccentric man might very well indulge the whim without any intention to offend And suppose that I refuse Mr Morris's invitation, he went on what then?

My orders are to drive you back where I took you from replied the man and set out to look for others up to midnight Those who have no fancy for such an adventure Mr Morris said, were not the guests for him

These words decided the Lieutenant on the spot

After all, he reflected as he descended from the hansom I have not had long to wait for my adventure'

He had hardly found footing on the sidewalk and was still feeling in his pocket for the fare, when the cab swung about and drove off by the way it came at the former breakneck velocity Brackenbury shouted after the man who paid no heed and continued to drive away but the sound of his voice was overheard in the house and the door was again thrown open emitting a flood of light upon the garden and a servant ran down to meet him holding an umbrella

The cabman has been paid observed the servant in a very civil tone and he proceeded to escort Brackenbury along the path and up the steps In the hall several other attendants relieved him of his hat cane and paletot gave him a ticket with a number of return and politely hurried him up a stair adorned with tropical flowers to the door of an apartment on the first storey Here a grave butler inquired his name and announcing Lieutenant Brackenbury Rich ushered him into the drawing room of the house

A young man slender and singularly handsome came forward and greeted him with an air at once courtly and affectionate Hundreds of candles of the finest wax lit up a room that was perfumed like the staircase with a profusion of rare and beautiful flowering shrubs A side table was loaded with tempting viands Several servants went to and fro with fruits and goblets of champagne The company was perhaps sixteen in number all men few beyond the prime of life and with hardly an exception of a dashing and capable exterior They were divided into two groups one about a roulette board and the other surrounding a table at which one of their number held a bank of baccarat

I see thought Brackenbury I am in a private gambling saloon, and the cabman was a tout

His eye had embraced the details and his mind formed the conclusion while his host was still holding him by the hand and to him his looks returned from this rapid survey At a second view Mr Morris surprised him still more than on the first The easy elegance of his manners the distinction amiability and courage that appeared upon his features fitted very ill with the Lieutenant's preconceptions on the subject of the proprietor of a hell and the tone of his conversation seemed to mark him out for a man of position and merit Brackenbury found he had an instinctive liking for his entertainer and though he chid himself for the weakness he was unable to resist a sort of friendly attraction for Mr Morris's person and character

I have heard of you Lieutenant Rich said Mr Morris lowering his tone, 'and believe me I am gratified to make your acquaintance Your looks accord with the reputation that has preceded you from India And if you will forget for a while the irregularity of your presentation in my house I shall feel it not only an honour but a genuine pleasure besides A man who makes a mouthful of barbarian cavaliers he added with a laugh should not be appalled by a breach of etiquette however serious

And he led him towards the sideboard and pressed him to partake of some refreshment

Upon my word the Lieutenant reflected this is one of the pleasantest fellows and I do not doubt one of the most agreeable societies in London

He partook of some champagne which he found excellent and observing that many of the company were already smoking he lit one of his own Manillas and strolled up to the roulette board where he sometimes made a stake and sometimes looked on smilingly on the fortune of others It was while he was thus idling that he became aware of a sharp scrutiny to which the whole of the guests were subjected Mr Morris went here and there ostensibly busied on hospitable concerns but he had ever a shrewd glance at disposal not a man of the party escaped his sudden searching looks he took stock of the bearing of heavy losers he valued the amount of the stakes he paused behind couples who were deep in conversation and in a word there was hardly a characteristic of any one present but he seemed to catch and make a note of it Brackenbury began to wonder if this were indeed a gambling hell it had so much the air of a private inquisition He followed Mr Morris in all his move-

ments, and although the man had a ready smile he seemed to perceive, as it were under a mask a haggard careworn and preoccupied spirit The fellows around him laughed and made their game but Brackenbury had lost interest in the guests

'This Morris thought he 'is no idler in the room Some deep purpose inspires him let it be mine to fathom it

Now and then Mr Morris would call one of his visitors aside and after a brief colloquy in an ante-room he would return alone and the visitors in question reappeared no more After a certain number of repetitions this performance excited Brackenbury's curiosity to a high degree He determined to be at the bottom of this minor mystery at once and strolling into the ante room found a deep window recess concealed by curtains of the fashionable green Here he hurriedly ensconced himself nor had he to wait long before the sound of steps and voices drew near him from the principal apartment Peering through the division he saw Mr Morris escorting a fat and ruddy personage, with somewhat the look of a commercial traveller whom Brackenbury had already remarked for his coarse laugh and under bred behaviour at the table The pair halted immediately before the window so that Brackenbury lost not a word of the following discourse —

'I beg you a thousand pardons' began Mr Morris with the most conciliatory manner, and if I appear rude I am sure you will readily forgive me In a place so great as London accidents must continually happen and the best that we can hope is to remedy them with as small delay as possible I will not deny that I fear you have made a mistake and honoured my poor house by inadvertence, for to speak openly I cannot at all remember your appearance Let me put the question without unnecessary circumlocution—between gentlemen of honour a word will suffice—Under whose roof do you suppose yourself to be?

That of Mr Morris' replied the other, with a prodigious display of confusion which had been visibly growing upon him throughout the last few words

Mr John or Mr James Morris? inquired the host

I really cannot tell you returned the unfortunate guest 'I am not personally acquainted with the gentleman any more than I am with yourself

I see said Mr Morris There is another person of the same name farther down the street and I have no doubt the policeman will be able to supply you with his number Believe me I felicitate myself on the misunderstanding which has procured me the pleasure of your company for so long and let me express a hope that we may meet again upon a more regular footing Meantime I would not for the world detain you longer from your friends John he added, raising his voice, will you see that this gentleman finds his great coat?

And with the most agreeable air Mr Morris escorted his visitor as far as the ante room door where he left him under conduct of the butler As he passed the window on his return to the drawing room Brackenbury could hear him utter a profound sigh as though his mind was loaded with a great

anxiety and his nerves already fatigued with the task on which he was engaged

For perhaps an hour the hansoms kept arriving with such frequency that Mr Morris had to receive a new guest for every old one that he sent away and the company preserved its number undiminished. But towards the end of that time the arrivals grew few and far between and at length ceased entirely while the process of elimination was continued with unimpaired activity. The drawing room began to look empty, the baccarat was discontinued for lack of a banker more than one person said good night of his own accord and was suffered to depart with expostulation and in the meanwhile Mr Morris redoubled in agreeable attentions to those who stayed behind. He went from group to group and from person to person with looks of the readiest sympathy and the most pertinent and pleasing talk he was not so much like a host as like a hostess and there was a feminine coquetry and condescension in his manner which charmed the hearts of all.

As the guests grew thinner Lieutenant Rich strolled for a moment out of the drawing room into the hall in quest of fresh air. But he had no sooner passed the threshold of the ante chamber than he was brought to a dead halt by a discovery of the most surprising nature. The flowering shrubs had disappeared from the staircase three large furniture waggons stood before the garden gate the servants were busy dismantling the house upon all sides and some of them had already donned their great coats and were preparing to depart. It was like the end of a country ball where everything has been supplied by contract. Brackenbury had indeed some matter for reflection. First the guests who were no real guests at all had been dismissed and now the servants, who could hardly be genuine servants were actively dispersing.

Was the whole establishment a sham? he asked himself 'The mushroom of a single night which should disappear before morning?

Watching a favourable opportunity Brackenbury dashed upstairs to the highest regions of the house. It was as he had expected. He ran from room to room, and saw not a stick of furniture nor so much as a picture on the walls. Although the house had been painted and prepared it was not only uninhabited at present but plainly had never been inhabited at all. The young officer remembered with astonishment its spacious, settled and hospitable air on his arrival. It was only at a prodigious cost that the imposture could have been carried out upon so great a scale.

Who then was Mr Morris? What was his intention in thus playing the householder for a single night in the remote west of London? And why did he collect his visitors at hazard from the streets?

Brackenbury remembered that he had already delayed too long and hastened to join the company. Many had left during his absence, and counting the Lieutenant and his host there were not more than five persons in the drawing room—recently so thronged. Mr Morris greeted him as he re entered the apartment with a smile and immediately rose to his feet.

It is now time gentlemen, said he to explain my purpose in decoying you from your amusements. I trust you did not find the evening hang very

dully on your hands but my object I will confess it was not to entertain your leisure but to help myself in an unfortunate necessity You are all gentlemen he continued 'your appearance does you that much justice and I ask for no better security Hence I speak it without concealment I ask you to render me a dangerous and delicate service dangerous because you may run the hazard of your lives and delicate because I must ask an absolute discretion upon all that you shall see or hear From an utter stranger the request is almost comically extravagant I am well aware of this and I would add at once if there be any one present who has heard enough if there be one among the party who recoils from a dangerous confidence and a piece of Quixotic devotion to he knows not whom—here is my hand ready and I shall wish him good night and God speed with all the sincerity in the world'

A very tall black man with a heavy stoop immediately responded to this appeal

I commend your frankness sir said he, and for my part I go I make no reflections but I cannot deny that you fill me with suspicious thoughts I go myself as I say and perhaps you will think I have no right to add words to my example

On the contrary replied Mr Morris I am obliged to you for all you say It would be impossible to exaggerate the gravity of my proposal

Well gentlemen what do you say? said the tall man addressing the others We have had our evening's frolic, shall we all go homeward peaceably in a body? You will think well of my suggestion in the morning when you see the sun again in innocence and safety

The speaker pronounced the last words with an intonation which added to their force and his face wore a singular expression full of gravity and significance Another of the company rose hastily and with some appearance of alarm prepared to take his leave There were only two who held their ground Brackenbury and an old red nosed cavalry Major but these two preserved a nonchalant demeanour and beyond a look of intelligence which they rapidly exchanged appeared entirely foreign to the discussion that had just terminated

Mr Morris conducted the deserters as far as the door which he closed upon their heels then he turned round disclosing a countenance of mingled relief and animation, and addressed the two officers as follows

I have chosen my men like Joshua in the Bible said Mr Morris and I now believe I have the pick of London Your appearance pleased my hansom cabmen then it delighted me, I have watched your behaviour in a strange company and under the most unusual circumstances I have studied how you played and how you bore your losses lastly I have put you to the test of a staggering announcement and you received it like an invitation to dinner It is not for nothing he cried that I have been for years the companion and the pupil of the bravest and wisest potentate in Europe

At the affair of Bunderchang observed the Major I asked for twelve volunteers and every trooper in the ranks replied to my appeal But a gaming party is not the same thing as a regiment under fire You may be pleased I

suppose to have found two and two who will not fail you at a push As for the pair who ran away I count them among the most pitiful hounds I ever met with Lieutenant Rich he added addressing Brackenbury I have heard much of you of late and I cannot doubt but you have also heard of me I am Major O Rooke

And the veteran tendered his hand which was red and tremulous, to the young Lieutenant

‘Who has not?’ answered Brackenbury

“When this little matter is settled said Mr Morris, you will think I have sufficiently rewarded you for I could offer neither a more valuable service than to make him acquainted with the other

‘And now said Major O Rooke is it a duel?

“A duel after a fashion replied Mr Morris, a duel with unknown and dangerous enemies and as I gravely fear a duel to the death I must ask you he continued to call me Morris no longer call me if you please Hammer smith, my real name as well as that of another person to whom I hope to present you before long you will gratify me by not asking and not seeking to discover for yourselves Three days ago the person of whom I speak disappeared suddenly from home and until this morning I received no hint of his situation You will fancy my alarm when I tell you that he is engaged upon a work of private justice Bound by an unhappy oath too lightly sworn he finds it necessary without the help of law to rid the earth of an insidious and bloody villain Already two of our friends and one of them my own born brother, have perished in the enterprise He himself or I am much deceived is taken in the same fatal toils But at least he still lives and still hopes, as this billet sufficiently proves

And the speaker no other than Colonel Geraldine proffered a letter, thus conceived —

“Major Hammersmith,—On Wednesday, at 3 A M, you will be admitted by the small door to the gardens of Rochester House, Regent’s Park, by a man who is entirely in my interest I must request you not to fail me by a second Pray bring my case of swords, and, if you can find them, one or two gentlemen of conduct and discretion to whom my person is unknown My name must not be used in this affair

T GODALL

‘From this wisdom alone if he had no other title’ pursued Colonel Geraldine when the others had each satisfied his curiosity my friend is a man whose directions should implicitly be followed I need not tell you therefore that I have not so much as visited the neighbourhood of Rochester House, and that I am still as wholly in the dark as either of yourselves as to the nature of my friend’s dilemma I betook myself as soon as I had received this order, to a furnishing contractor and in a few hours the house in which we now are had assumed its late air of festival My scheme was at least original, and I am far from regretting an action which has procured me the services of

Major O Rooke and Lieutenant Brackenbury Rich But the servants in the street will have a strange awakening The house which this evening was full of lights and visitors they will find uninhabited and for sale to morrow morning Thus even the most serious concerns added the Colonel have a merry side

And let us add a merry ending said Brackenbury

The Colonel consulted his watch

It is now hard on two he said We have an hour before us and a swift cab is at the door Tell me if I may count upon your help

During a long life replied Major O Rooke I never took back my hand from anything nor so much as hedged a bet

Brackenbury signified his readiness in the most becoming terms and after they had drunk a glass or two of wine the Colonel gave each of them a loaded revolver and the three mounted into the cab and drove off for the address in question

Rochester House was a magnificent residence on the banks of the canal The large extent of the garden isolated it in an unusual degree from the annoyances of neighbourhood It seemed the *parc aux cerfs* of some great noble man or millionaire As far as could be seen from the street there was not a glimmer of light in any of the numerous windows of the mansion and the place had a look of neglect as though the master had been long from home

The cab was discharged and the three gentlemen were not long in discovering the small door which was a sort of postern in a lane between two garden walls It still wanted ten or fifteen minutes of the appointed time the rain fell heavily and the adventurers sheltered themselves below some pendant ivy and spoke in low tones of the approaching trial

Suddenly Geraldine raised his finger to command silence and all three bent their hearing to the utmost Through the continuous noise of the rain the steps and voices of two men became audible from the other side of the wall and as they drew nearer Brackenbury whose sense of hearing was remarkably acute could even distinguish some fragments of their talk

Is the grave dug asked one

It is replied the other 'behind the laurel hedge When the job is done we can cover it with a pile of stakes

The first speaker laughed and the sound of his merriment was shocking to the listeners on the other side

In an hour from now he said

And by the sound of the steps it was obvious that the pair had separated and were proceeding in contrary directions

Almost immediately after the postern door was cautiously opened a white face was protruded into a lane and a hand was seen beckoning to the watchers In dead silence the three passed the door which was immediately locked behind them and followed their guide through several garden alleys to the kitchen entrance of the house A single candle burned in the great paved kitchen, which was destitute of the customary furniture and as the party pro

ceeded to ascend from thence by a flight of winding stairs, a prodigious noise of rats testified still more plainly to the dilapidation of the house

Their conductor preceded them carrying the candle He was a lean man, much bent but still agile and he turned from time to time and admonished silence and caution by his gestures Colonel Geraldine followed on his heels the case of swords under one arm, and a pistol ready in the other Brackenbury's heart beat thickly He perceived that they were still in time but he judged from the alacrity of the old man that the hour of action must be near at hand and the circumstances of this adventure were so obscure and menacing the place seemed so well chosen for the darkest acts that an older man than Brackenbury might have been pardoned a measure of emotion as he closed the procession up the winding stair

At the top the guide threw open a door and ushered the three officers before him into a small apartment lighted by a smoky lamp and the glow of a modest fire At the chimney corner sat a man in the early prime of life and of a stout but courtly and commanding appearance His attitude and expression were those of the most unmoved composure, he was smoking a cheroot with much enjoyment and deliberation and on a table by his elbow stood a long glass of some effervescent beverage which diffused an agreeable odour through the room

Welcome said he extending his hand to Colonel Geraldine I knew I might count on your exactitude

On my devotion replied the Colonel with a bow

'Present me to your friends continued the first, and when that ceremony had been performed I wish gentlemen he added with the most exquisite affability that I could offer you a more cheerful programme it is ungracious to inaugurate an acquaintance upon serious affairs but the compulsion of events is stronger than the obligations of good fellowship I hope and believe you will be able to forgive me this unpleasant evening and for men of your stamp it will be enough to know that you are conferring a considerable favour

Your Highness said the Major must pardon my bluntness I am unable to hide what I know For some time back I have suspected Major Hammersmith but Mr Godall is unmistakable To seek two men in London unacquainted with Prince Florizel of Bohemia was to ask too much at Fortune's hands

Prince Florizel! cried Brackenbury in amazement

And he gazed with the deepest interest on the features of the celebrated personage before him

I shall not lament the loss of my incognito ' remarked the Prince for it enables me to thank you with the more authority You would have done as much for Mr Godall I feel sure as for the Prince of Bohemia but the latter can perhaps do more for you The gain is mine he added with a courteous gesture

And the next moment he was conversing with the two officers about the Indian army and the native troops a subject on which as on all others he had a remarkable fund of information and the soundest views

There was something so striking in this man's attitude at a moment of deadly

peril that Brackenbury was overcome with respectful admiration, nor was he less sensible to the charm of his conversation or the surprising amenity of his address Every gesture every intonation was not only noble in itself but seemed to ennable the fortunate mortal for whom it was intended, and Brackenbury confessed to himself with enthusiasm that this was a sovereign for whom a brave man might thankfully lay down his life

Many minutes had thus passed, when the person who had introduced them into the house and who had sat ever since in a corner and with his watch in his hand arose and whispered a word into the Prince's ear

It is well, Dr Noel replied Florizel aloud and then addressing the others You will excuse me gentlemen he added, if I have to leave you in the dark The moment now approaches

Dr Noel extinguished the lamp A faint grey light premonitory of the dawn illuminated the window but was not sufficient to illuminate the room, and when the Prince rose to his feet it was impossible to distinguish his features or to make a guess at the nature of the emotion which obviously affected him as he spoke He moved towards the door, and placed himself at one side of it in an attitude of the wariest attention

You will have the kindness he said to maintain the strictest silence and to conceal yourself in the densest of the shadow

The three officers and the physician hastened to obey and for nearly ten minutes the only sound in Rochester House was occasioned by the excursions of the rats behind the woodwork At the end of that period a loud creak of a hinge broke in with surprising distinctness on the silence and shortly after, the watchers could distinguish a slow and cautious tread approaching up the kitchen stair At every second step the intruder seemed to pause and lend an ear and during these intervals which seemed of an incalculable duration a profound disquiet possessed the spirit of the listeners Dr Noel accustomed as he was to dangerous emotions suffered an almost pitiful physical prostration his breath whistled in his lungs his teeth grated one upon another, and his joints cracked aloud as he nervously shifted his position

At last a hand was laid upon the door and the bolt shot back with a slight report There followed another pause during which Brackenbury could see the Prince draw himself together noiselessly as if for some unusual exertion Then the door opened letting in a little more of the light of the morning and the figure of a man appeared upon the threshold and stood motionless He was tall and carried a knife in his hand Even in the twilight they could see his upper teeth bare and glistening for his mouth was open like that of a hound about to leap The man had evidently been over the head in water but a minute or two before and even while he stood there the drops kept falling from his wet clothes and pattered on the floor

The next moment he crossed the threshold There was a leap a stifled cry, an instantaneous struggle and before Colonel Geraldine could spring to his aid the Prince held the man disarmed and helpless by the shoulders

Dr Noel he said 'you will be so good as to re light the lamp And relinquishing the charge of his prisoner to Geraldine and Brackenbury,

he crossed the room and set his back against the chimney piece As soon as the lamp had been kindled the party beheld an unaccustomed sternness on the Prince's features It was no longer Florizel the careless gentleman it was the Prince of Bohemia justly incensed and full of deadly purpose, who now raised his head and addressed the captive President of the Suicide Club

President he said you have laid your last snare and your own feet are taken in it The day is beginning, it is your last morning You have just swum the Regent's Canal it is your last bathe in this world Your old accomplice, Dr Noel so far from betraying me has delivered you into my hands for judgment And the grave you had dug for me this afternoon shall serve in God's almighty providence to hide your own just doom from the curiosity of mankind Kneel and pray sir if you have a mind that way for your time is short and God is weary of your iniquities

The President made no answer either by word or sign, but continued to hang his head and gaze sullenly on the floor, as though he were conscious of the Prince's prolonged and unsparing regard

'Gentlemen' continued Florizel resuming the ordinary tone of his conversation, this is a fellow who has long eluded me but whom, thanks to Dr Noel I now have tightly by the heels To tell the story of his misdeeds would occupy more time than we can now afford, but if the canal had contained nothing but the blood of his victims I believe the wretch would have been no drier than you see him Even in an affair of this sort I desire to preserve the form of honour But I make you the judges gentlemen—this is more an execution than a duel and to give the rogue his choice of weapons would be to push too far a point of etiquette I cannot afford to lose my life in such a business he continued unlocking the case of swords and as a pistol bullet travels so often on the wings of chance and skill and courage may fall by the most trembling marksman I have decided and I feel sure you will approve my determination to put this question to the touch of swords

When Brackenbury and Major O'Rooke to whom these remarks were particularly addressed had each intimated his approval, Quick sir added Prince Florizel to the President choose a blade and do not keep me waiting, I have an impatience to be done with you for ever

For the first time since he was captured and disarmed the President raised his head and it was plain that he began instantly to pluck up courage

'Is it to be stand up?' he asked eagerly and between you and me?

'I mean so far to honour you' replied the Prince

'Oh come!' cried the President With a fair field who knows how things may happen? I must add that I consider it handsome behaviour on your Highness's part and if the worst comes to the worst I shall die by one of the most gallant gentlemen in Europe

And the President liberated by those who had detained him stepped up to the table and began with minute attention to select a sword He was highly elated and seemed to feel no doubt that he should issue victorious from the contest The spectators grew alarmed in the face of so entire a confidence and adjured Prince Florizel to reconsider his intention

It is but a farce he answered and I think I can promise you gentlemen, that it will not be long a playing

Your Highness will be careful not to over reach said Colonel Geraldine Geraldine returned the Prince did you ever know me fail in a debt of honour? I owe you this man's death and you shall have it

The President at last satisfied himself with one of the rapiers and signified his readiness by a gesture that was not devoid of a rude nobility The nearness of peril and the sense of courage even to this obnoxious villain lent an air of manhood and a certain grace

The Prince helped himself at random to a sword

Colonel Geraldine and Doctor Noel he said will have the goodness to await me in this room I wish no personal friend of mine to be involved in this transaction Major O Rooke you are a man of some years and a settled reputation—let me recommend the President to your good graces Lieutenant Rich will be so good as lend me his attentions a young man cannot have too much experience in such affairs

Your Highness, replied Brackenbury 'it is an honour I shall prize extremely

It is well returned Prince Florizel, I shall hope to stand your friend in more important circumstances

And so saying he led the way out of the apartment and down the kitchen stairs

The two men who were thus left alone threw open the window and leaned out straining every sense to catch an indication of the tragical events that were about to follow The rain was now over day had almost come and the birds were piping in the shrubbery and on the forest trees of the garden The Prince and his companions were visible for a moment as they followed an alley between two flowering thickets but at the first corner a clump of foliage intervened and they were again concealed from view This was all that the Colonel and the Physician had an opportunity to see and the garden was so vast and the place of combat evidently so remote from the house that not even the noise of sword play reached their ears He has taken him towards the grave said Dr Noel with a shudder

God cried the Colonel God defend the right!

And they awaited the event in silence the Doctor shaking with fear, the Colonel in an agony of sweat Many minutes must have elapsed the day was sensibly broader and the birds were singing more heartily in the garden before a sound of returning footsteps recalled their glances towards the door It was the Prince and the two Indian officers who entered God had defended the right

I am ashamed of my emotion said Prince Florizel I feel it is a weakness unworthy of my station, but the continued existence of that hound of hell had begun to prey upon me like a disease and his death has more refreshed me than a night of slumber Look Geraldine he continued throwing his sword upon the floor, there is the blood of the man who killed your brother It should be a welcome sight And yet, he added see how strangely we men

are made' my revenge is not yet five minutes old and already I am beginning to ask myself if even revenge be attainable on this precarious stage of life The ill he did who can undo it? The career in which he amassed a huge fortune (for the house itself in which we stand belonged to him)—that career is now a part of the destiny of mankind for ever and I might weary myself making thrusts in carte until the crack of judgment and Geraldine's brother would be none the less dead and a thousand other innocent persons would be none the less dishonoured and debauched! The existence of a man is so small a thing to take so mighty a thing to employ! Alas! he cried is there anything in life so disenchanted as attainment?

God's justice has been done replied the Doctor So much I behold The lesson your Highness has been a cruel one for me and I await my own turn with deadly apprehension

What was I saying? cried the Prince I have punished and here is the man beside us who can help me to undo Ah Dr Noel! you and I have before us many a day of hard and honourable toil and perhaps, before we have done, you may have more than redeemed your early errors

And in the meantime said the Doctor, let me go and bury my oldest friend "

(And this, observes the erudite Arabian is the fortunate conclusion of the tale The Prince, it is superfluous to mention, forgot none of those who served him in this great exploit and to this day his authority and influence help them forward in their public career, while his condescending friendship adds a charm to their private life To collect, continues my author all the strange events in which this Prince has played the part of Providence were to fill the habitable globe with books But the stories which relate to the fortunes of THE RAJAH'S DIAMOND are of too entertaining a description, says he to be omitted Following prudently in the footsteps of this Oriental, we shall now begin the series to which he refers with the STORY OF THE BANDBOX)

THE RAJAH'S DIAMOND

STORY OF THE BANDBOX

UP TO THE AGE of sixteen at a private school and afterwards at one of those great institutions for which England is justly famous Mr Harry Hartley had received the ordinary education of a gentleman At that period he manifested a remarkable distaste for study and his only surviving parent being both weak and ignorant he was permitted thenceforward to spend his time in the attainment of petty and purely elegant accomplishments Two years later he was left an orphan and almost a beggar For all active and industrious pursuits Harry was unfitted alike by nature and training He could sing romantic ditties and accompany himself with discretion on a piano he was a graceful

although a timid cavalier, he had a pronounced taste for chess and nature had sent him into the world with one of the most engaging exteriors that can well be fancied Blond and pink with dove's eyes and a gentle smile he had an air of agreeable tenderness and melancholy and the most submissive and caressing manners But when all is said he was not the man to lead armaments of war or direct the councils of a State

A fortunate chance and some influence obtained for Harry at the time of his bereavement the position of private secretary to Major General Sir Thomas Vandeleur CB Sir Thomas was a man of sixty loud spoken boisterous and domineering For some reason some service the nature of which had been often whispered and repeatedly denied the Rajah of Kashgar had presented the officer with the sixth known diamond of the world The gift transformed General Vandeleur from a poor into a wealthy man from an obscure and unpopular soldier into one of the lions of London society, the possessor of the Rajah's Diamond was welcome in the most exclusive circles, and he had found a lady, young beautiful and well born who was willing to call the diamond hers even at the price of marriage with Sir Thomas Vandeleur It was commonly said at the time that as like draws to like one jewel had attracted another certainly Lady Vandeleur was not only a gem of the finest water in her own person but she showed herself to the world in a very costly setting, and she was considered by many respectable authorities as one among the three or four best dressed women in England

Harry's duty as secretary was not particularly onerous but he had a dislike for all prolonged work, it gave him pain to ink his fingers and the charms of Lady Vandeleur and her toilettes drew him often from the library to the boudoir He had the prettiest ways among women could talk fashions with enjoyment, and was never more happy than when criticising a shade of ribbon, or running on an errand to the milliner's In short Sir Thomas's correspondence fell into pitiful arrears and my Lady had another lady's maid

At last the General who was one of the least patient of military commanders arose from his place in a violent access of passion and indicated to his secretary that he had no further need for his services with one of those explanatory gestures which are most rarely employed between gentlemen The door being unfortunately open Mr Hartley fell downstairs head foremost

He arose somewhat hurt and very deeply aggrieved The life in the General's house precisely suited him he moved on a more or less doubtful footing in very genteel company he did little he ate of the best and he had a lukewarm satisfaction in the presence of Lady Vandeleur which in his own heart he dubbed by a more emphatic name

Immediately after he had been outraged by the military foot he hurried to the boudoir and recounted his sorrows

You know very well my dear Harry replied Lady Vandeleur for she called him by name like a child or a domestic servant that you never by any chance do what the General tells you No more do I, you may say But that is different A woman can earn her pardon for a good year of disobedience by a single adroit submission, and besides no one is married to his

private secretary I shall be sorry to lose you but since you cannot stay longer in a house where you have been insulted I shall wish you good bye, and I promise you to make the General smart for his behaviour

Harry's countenance fell tears came into his eyes and he gazed on Lady Vandeleur with a tender reproach

'My Lady said he what is an insult? I should think little indeed of any one who could not forgive them by the score But to leave one's friends, to tear up the bonds of affection—

He was unable to continue, for his emotion choked him, and he began to weep

Lady Vandeleur looked at him with a curious expression.

This little fool she thought imagines himself to be in love with me Why should he not become my servant instead of the General's? He is good-natured obliging and understands dress and besides it will keep him out of mischief He is positively too pretty to be unattached

That night she talked it over with the General who was already somewhat ashamed of his vivacity and Harry was transferred to the feminine department, where his life was little short of heavenly He was always dressed with uncommon nicety wore delicate flowers in his button hole and could entertain a visitor with tact and pleasantry He took a pride in servility to a beautiful woman received Lady Vandeleur's commands as so many marks of favour and was pleased to exhibit himself before other men, who derided and despised him, in his character of male lady-s-maid and man milliner Nor could he think enough of his existence from a moral point of view Wickedness seemed to him an essentially male attribute and to pass one's days with a delicate woman, and principally occupied about trimmings was to inhabit an enchanted isle among the storms of life

One fine morning he came into the drawing room and began to arrange some music on the top of the piano Lady Vandeleur at the other end of the apartment, was speaking somewhat eagerly with her brother, Charlie Pendragon, an elderly young man much broken with dissipation and very lame of one foot The private secretary to whose entrance they paid no regard, could not avoid overhearing a part of their conversation

To day or never said the lady Once and for all it shall be done today "

"To day if it must be replied the brother with a sigh 'But it is a false step a ruinous step Clara and we shall live to repent it dismally

Lady Vandeleur looked her brother steadily and somewhat strangely in the face

You forget, she said the man must die at last "

'Upon my word Clara said Pendragon I believe you are the most heartless rascal in England

You men' she returned 'are so coarsely built, that you can never appreciate a shade of meaning You are yourselves rapacious violent, immodest, careless of distinction and yet the least thought for the future shocks you in a woman I have no patience with such stuff You would despise in a common banker the imbecility that you expect to find in us

You are very likely right replied her brother, you were always cleverer than I And anyway you know my motto The family before all

Yes Charlie, she returned, taking his hand in hers, I know your motto better than you know it yourself And Clara before the family! Is not that the second part of it? Indeed you are the best of brothers, and I love you dearly

Mr Pendragon got up, looking a little confused by these family endearments

I had better not be seen," said he 'I understand my part to a miracle and I'll keep an eye on the Tame Cat

Do she replied He is an abject creature and might ruin all "

She kissed the tips of her fingers to him daintily, and the brother withdrew by the boudoir and the back stair

Harry said Lady Vandeleur turning towards the secretary as soon as they were alone I have a commission for you this morning But you shall take a cab I cannot have my secretary freckled

She spoke the last words with emphasis and a look of half-motherly pride that caused great contentment to poor Harry and he professed himself charmed to find an opportunity of serving her

It is another of our great secrets she went on archly 'and no one must know it but my secretary and me Sir Thomas would make the saddest disturbance, and if you only knew how weary I am of these scenes! Oh Harry Harry can you explain to me what makes you men so violent and unjust? But, indeed I know you cannot you are the only man in the world who knows nothing of these shameful passions you are so good Harry and so kind you at least can be a woman's friend and do you know? I think you make the others more ugly by comparison

'It is you, said Harry gallantly who are so kind to me You treat me like—

Like a mother ' interposed Lady Vandeleur I try to be a mother to you Or at least, she corrected herself with a smile almost a mother I am afraid I am too young to be your mother really Let us say a friend—a dear friend

She paused long enough to let her words take effect in Harry's sentimental quarters but not long enough to allow him a reply

"But all this is beside our purpose she resumed You will find a band box in the left-hand side of the oak wardrobe it is underneath the pink slip that I wore on Wednesday with my Mechlin You will take it immediately to this address, and she gave him a paper 'but do not on any account let it out of your hands until you have received a receipt written by myself Do you understand? Answer if you please—answer This is extremely important, and I must ask you to pay some attention

Harry pacified her by repeating her instructions perfectly and she was just going to tell him more when General Vandeleur flung into the apartment scarlet with anger and holding a long and elaborate milliner's bill in his hand

"Will you look at this, madam?" he cried Will you have the goodness to

look at this document? I know well enough you married me for my money, and I hope I can make as great allowances as any other man in the service, but, as God made me I mean to put a period to this disreputable prodigality ”

‘Mr Hartley said Lady Vandeleur I think you understand what you have to do May I ask you to see to it at once?’

‘Stop said the General addressing Harry one word before you go ” And then turning again to Lady Vandeleur What is this precious fellow’s errand? he demanded I trust him no further than I do yourself let me tell you If he had as much as the rudiments of honesty, he would scorn to stay in this house and what he does for his wages is a mystery to all the world What is his errand madam? and why are you hurrying him away?’

I supposed you had something to say to me in private replied the lady

You spoke about an errand insisted the General Do not attempt to deceive me in my present state of temper You certainly spoke about an errand ’

‘If you insist on making your servants privy to our humiliating dissensions’ replied Lady Vandeleur perhaps I had better ask Mr Hartley to sit down No? she continued then you may go Mr Hartley I trust you may remember all that you have heard in this room it may be useful to you ’

Harry at once made his escape from the drawing room and as he ran upstairs he could hear the General’s voice upraised in declamation and the thin tones of Lady Vandeleur planting icy repartees at every opening How cordially he admired the wife! How skillfully she could evade an awkward question with what secure effrontery she repeated her instructions under the very guns of the enemy! and on the other hand how he detested the husband!

There had been nothing unfamiliar in the morning’s events for he was continually in the habit of serving Lady Vandeleur on secret missions principally connected with millinery There was a skeleton in the house as he well knew The bottomless extravagance and the unknown liabilities of the wife had long since swallowed her own fortune and threatened day by day to engulf that of the husband Once or twice in every year exposure and ruin seemed imminent and Harry kept trotting round to all sorts of furnishers shops telling small fibs and paying small advances on the gross amount until another term was tided over and the lady and her faithful secretary breathed again For Harry in a double capacity was heart and soul upon that side of the war, not only did he adore Lady Vandeleur and fear and dislike her husband but he naturally sympathised with the love of finery and his own single extravagance was at the tailor’s

He found the bandbox where it had been described arranged his toilette with care and left the house The sun shone brightly the distance he had to travel was considerable and he remembered with dismay that the General’s sudden irruption had prevented Lady Vandeleur from giving him money for a cab On this sultry day there was every chance that his complexion would suffer severely and to walk through so much of London with a bandbox on his arm was a humiliation almost insupportable to a youth of his character He paused and took counsel with himself The Vandeleurs lived in Eaton Place, his destination was near Notting Hill, plainly he might cross the Park

by keeping well in the open and avoiding populous alleys and he thanked his stars when he reflected that it was still comparatively early in the day

Anxious to be rid of his incubus he walked somewhat faster than his ordinary, and he was already some way through Kensington Gardens when, in a solitary spot among trees he found himself confronted by the General

I beg your pardon Sir Thomas observed Harry politely falling on one side for the other stood directly in his path

Where are you going sir? asked the General

'I am taking a little walk among the trees replied the lad

The General struck the bandbox with his cane

"With that thing? he cried 'You lie sir and you know you lie!"

Indeed Sir Thomas returned Harry, I am not accustomed to be questioned in so high a key '

You do not understand your position said the General You are my servant, and a servant of whom I have conceived the most serious suspicions. How do I know but that your box is full of teaspoons?

It contains a silk hat belonging to a friend said Harry

Very well replied General Vandeleur Then I want to see your friend' silk hat I have he added grimly, a singular curiosity for hats, and I believe you know me to be somewhat positive

I beg your pardon, Sir Thomas I am exceedingly grieved Harry apologised but indeed this is a private affair

The General caught him roughly by the shoulder with one hand while he raised his cane in the most menacing manner with the other Harry gave himself up for lost but at the same moment Heaven vouchsafed him an unexpected defender in the person of Charlie Pendragon, who now strode forward from behind the trees

Come, come, General, hold your hand, ' said he, ' this is neither courteous nor manly

Aha! cried the General wheeling round upon his new antagonist Mr Pendragon! And do you suppose Mr Pendragon that because I have had the misfortune to marry your sister I shall suffer myself to be dogged and thwarted by a discredited and bankrupt libertine like you? My acquaintance with Lady Vandeleur sir, has taken away all my appetite for the other members of her family

And do you fancy, General Vandeleur retorted Charlie that because my sister has had the misfortune to marry you she there and then forfeited her rights and privileges as a lady? I own sir that by that action she did as much as anybody could do to derogate from her position, but to me she is still a Pendragon I make it my business to protect her from ungentlemanly outrage and if you were ten times her husband I would not permit her liberty to be restrained nor her private messengers to be violently arrested

How is that Mr Hartley? interrogated the General Mr Pendragon is of my opinion it appears He too, suspects that Lady Vandeleur has something to do with your friend's silk hat

Charlie saw that he had committed an unpardonable blunder which he hastened to repair

How sir? he cried I suspect do you say? I suspect nothing Only where I find strength abused and a man brutalising his inferiors, I take the liberty to interfere

As he said these words he made a sign to Harry which the latter was too dull or too much troubled to understand

In what way am I to construe your attitude sir? demanded Vandeleur

Why sir as you please returned Pendragon

The General once more raised his cane and made a cut for Charlie's head but the latter lame foot and all evaded the blow with his umbrella ran in and immediately closed with his formidable adversary

Run Harry run! he cried run you dolt!

Harry stood petrified for a moment watching the two men sway together in this fierce embrace then he turned and took to his heels When he cast a glance over his shoulder he saw the General prostrate under Charlie's knee but still making desperate efforts to reverse the situation and the Gardens seemed to have filled with people, who were running from all directions towards the scene of fight This spectacle lent the secretary wings, and he did not relax his pace until he had gained the Bayswater road, and plunged at random into an unfrequented by-street

To see two gentlemen of his acquaintance thus brutally mauling each other was deeply shocking to Harry He desired to forget the sight he desired above all to put as great a distance as possible between himself and General Vandeleur and in his eagerness for this he forgot everything about his destination and hurried before him headlong and trembling When he remembered that Lady Vandeleur was the wife of one and the sister of the other of these gladiators, his heart was touched with sympathy for a woman so distressingly misplaced in life Even his own situation in the General's household looked hardly so pleasing as usual in the light of these violent transactions

He had walked some little distance busied with these meditations before a slight collision with another passenger reminded him of the bandbox on his arm

Heavens! cried he where was my head? and whither have I wandered?

Thereupon he consulted the envelope which Lady Vandeleur had given him The address was there but without a name Harry was simply directed to ask for the gentleman who expected a parcel from Lady Vandeleur and if he were not at home to await his return The gentleman added the note should present a receipt in the handwriting of the lady herself All this seemed mightily mysterious and Harry was above all astonished at the omission of the name and the formality of the receipt He had thought little of this last when he heard it dropped in conversation but reading it in cold blood and taking it in connection with the other strange particulars he became convinced that he was engaged in perilous affairs For half a moment he had a doubt of Lady Vandeleur herself for he found these obscure proceedings somewhat unworthy of so high a lady and became more critical when her secrets were

preserved against himself But her empire over his spirit was too complete he dismissed his suspicions and blamed himself roundly for having so much as entertained them

In one thing however his duty and interest his generosity and his terrors coincided—to get rid of the bandbox with the greatest possible despatch

He accosted the first policeman and courteously inquired his way It turned out that he was already not far from his destination and a walk of a few minutes brought him to a small house in a lane freshly painted and kept with the most scrupulous attention The knocker and bell pull were highly polished, flowering pot-herbs garnished the sills of the different windows and curtains of some rich material concealed the interior from the eyes of curious passengers The place had an air of repose and secrecy, and Harry was so far caught with this spirit that he knocked with more than usual discretion and was more than usually careful to remove all impurity from his boots

A servant maid of some personal attractions immediately opened the door, and seemed to regard the secretary with no unkind eyes

This is the parcel from Lady Vandeleur said Harry

I know replied the maid with a nod But the gentleman is from home Will you leave it with me?

'I cannot answered Harry 'I am directed not to part with it but upon a certain condition and I must ask you I am afraid to let me wait

"Well said she I suppose I may let you wait I am lonely enough I can tell you and you do not look as though you would eat a girl But be sure and do not ask the gentleman's name for that I am not to tell you

Do you say so? cried Harry Why how strange! But indeed for some time back I walk among surprises One question I think I may surely ask with out indiscretion Is he the master of this house?

He is a lodger and not eight days old at that returned the maid And now a question for a question Do you know Lady Vandeleur?

I am her private secretary replied Harry with a glow of modest pride

She is pretty is she not? pursued the servant

'Oh beautiful' cried Harry wonderfully lovely, and not less good and kind'

You look kind enough yourself she retorted, and I wager you are worth a dozen Lady Vandeleurs

Harry was properly scandalized

I! he cried I am only a secretary!

Do you mean that for me? said the girl "Because I am only a housemaid, if you please And then relenting at the sight of Harry's obvious confusion, 'I know you mean nothing of the sort' she added, and I like your looks but I think nothing of your Lady Vandeleur Oh these mistresses! she cried To send out a real gentleman like you—with a bandbox—in broad day!

During this talk they had remained in their original positions—she on the doorstep he on the side walk bareheaded for the sake of coolness and with the bandbox on his arm But upon this last speech Harry, who was unable to support such point blank compliments to his appearance nor the encouraging

look with which they were accompanied began to change his attitude and glance from left to right in perturbation In so doing he turned his face towards the lower end of the lane and there to his indescribable dismay his eyes encountered those of General Vandeleur The General in a prodigious flutter of heat hurry and indignation had been scouring the streets in chase of his brother in law but so soon as he caught a glimpse of the delinquent secretary, his purpose changed his anger flowed into a new channel and he turned on his heel and came tearing up the lane with truculent gestures and vociferations

Harry made but one bolt of it into the house driving the maid before him, and the door was slammed in his pursuer's countenance

Is there a bar? Will it lock? asked Harry while a salvo on the knocker made the house echo from wall to wall

Why what is wrong with you? asked the maid Is it this old gentleman?

If he gets hold of me whispered Harry I am as good as dead He has been pursuing me all day carries a sword stick, and is an Indian military officer

These are fine manners cried the maid And what, if you please, may be his name?

It is the General my master answered Harry He is after this bandbox"

Did not I tell you? cried the maid in triumph I told you I thought worse than nothing of your Lady Vandeleur and if you had an eye in your head you might see what she is for yourself An ungrateful minx I will be bound for that!

The General renewed his attack upon the knocker and his passion growing with delay began to kick and beat upon the panels of the door

It is lucky observed the girl that I am alone in the house your General may hammer until he is weary and there is none to open for him Follow me!

So saying she led Harry into the kitchen where she made him sit down, and stood by him herself in an affectionate attitude, with a hand upon his shoulder The din at the door so far from abating continued to increase in volume and at each blow the unhappy secretary was shaken to the heart.

What is your name? asked the girl

'Harry Hartley he replied

Mine she went on is Prudence Do you like it?

"Very much said Harry But hear a moment how the General beats upon the door He will certainly break it in and then in heaven's name, what have I to look for but death?

'You put yourself very much about with no occasion answered Prudence. 'Let your General knock he will do no more than blister his hands Do you think I would keep you here if I were not sure to save you? Oh no I am a good friend to those that please me' and we have a back door upon another lane But she added checking him for he had got upon his feet immediately on this welcome news 'but I will not show where it is unless you kiss me. Will you Harry?

'That I will' he cried remembering his gallantry not for your back door, but because you are good and pretty

And he administered two or three cordial salutes which were returned to him in kind

Then Prudence led him to the back gate and put her hand upon the key

'Will you come and see me' she asked

'I will indeed said Harry Do not I owe you my life'

'And now she added opening the door, run as hard as you can for I shall let in the General'

Harry scarcely required this advice fear had him by the forelock and he addressed himself diligently to flight A few steps and he believed he would escape from his trials, and return to Lady Vandeleur in honour and safety But these few steps had not been taken before he heard a man's voice hailing him by name with many execrations and looking over his shoulder he beheld Charlie Pendragon waving him with both arms to return The shock of this new incident was so sudden and profound and Harry was already worked into so high a state of nervous tension that he could think of nothing better than to accelerate his pace and continue running He should certainly have remembered the scene in Kensington Gardens he should certainly have concluded that where the General was his enemy Charlie Pendragon could be no other than a friend But such was the fever and perturbation of his mind that he was struck by none of these considerations and only continued to run the faster up the lane

Charlie by the sound of his voice and the vile terms that he hurled after the secretary was obviously beside himself with rage He too ran his very best but, try as he might the physical advantages were not upon his side and his outcries and the fall of his lame foot on the macadam began to fall farther and farther into the wake

Harry's hopes began once more to arise The lane was both steep and narrow but it was exceedingly solitary bordered on either hand by garden walls overhung with foliage, and for as far as the fugitive could see in front of him there was neither a creature moving nor an open door Providence weary of persecution was now offering him an open field for his escape

Alas' as he came abreast of a garden door under a tuft of chestnuts it was suddenly drawn back and he could see inside upon a garden path the figure of a butcher's boy with his tray upon his arm He had hardly recognised the fact before he was some steps beyond upon the other side But the fellow had had time to observe him he was evidently much surprised to see a gentleman go by at so unusual a pace, and he came out into the lane and began to call after Harry with shouts of ironical encouragement

His appearance gave a new idea to Charlie Pendragon who, although he was now sadly out of breath, once more upraised his voice

'Stop, thief' he cried

And immediately the butcher's boy had taken up the cry and joined in the pursuit.

This was a bitter moment for the hunted secretary It is true that his terror

enabled him once more to improve his pace and gain with every step on his pursuers, but he was well aware that he was near the end of his resources and should he meet any one coming the other way his predicament in the narrow lane would be desperate indeed

I must find a place of concealment he thought and that within the next few seconds or all is over with me in this world

Scarcely had the thought crossed his mind than the lane took a sudden turn ing and he found himself hidden from his enemies There are circumstances in which even the least energetic of mankind learn to behave with vigour and decision, and the most cautious forget their prudence and embrace fool hardy resolutions This was one of those occasions for Harry Hartley and those who knew him best would have been the most astonished at the lad's audacity He stopped dead flung the bandbox over a garden wall and leaping upward with incredible agility and seizing the copestone with his hands he tumbled headlong after it into the garden

He came to himself a moment afterwards seated in a border of small rose bushes His hands and knees were cut and bleeding for the wall had been protected against such an escalade by a liberal provision of old bottles and he was conscious of a general dislocation and a painful swimming in the head Facing him across the garden which was in admirable order, and set with flowers of the most delicious perfume he beheld the back of a house It was of considerable extent and plainly habitable but in odd contrast to the grounds it was crazy ill kept and of a mean appearance On all other sides the circuit of the garden wall appeared unbroken

He took in these features of the scene with mechanical glances but his mind was still unable to piece together or draw a rational conclusion from what he saw And when he heard footsteps advancing on the gravel although he turned his eyes in that direction it was with no thought either for defence or fight

The new comer was a large coarse and very sordid personage in gardening clothes and with a watering pot in his left hand One less confused would have been affected with some alarm at the sight of this man's huge proportions and black and lowering eyes But Harry was too gravely shaken by his fall to be so much as terrified, and if he was unable to divert his glances from the gardener he remained absolutely passive and suffered him to draw near to take him by the shoulder and to plant him roughly on his feet, without a motion of resistance

For a moment the two stared into each other's eyes Harry fascinated the man filled with wrath and a cruel sneering humour

Who are you? he demanded at last Who are you to come flying over my wall and break my *Gloire de Dijons*? What is your name? he added, shaking him, and what may be your business here?

Harry could not as much as proffer a word in explanation

But just at that moment Pendragon and the butcher's boy went clumping past and the sound of their feet and their hoarse cries echoed loudly in the narrow lane The gardener had received his answer and he looked down into Harry's face with an obnoxious smile

"A thief!" he said. Upon my word and a very good thing you must make of it, for I see you dressed like a gentleman from top to toe. Are you not ashamed to go about the world in such a trim with honest folk I dare say glad to buy your cast off finery second hand? Speak up you dog the man went on you can understand English I suppose and I mean to have a bit of talk with you before I march you to the station.

Indeed sir said Harry this is all a dreadful misconception, and if you will go with me to Sir Thomas Vandeleur's in Eaton Place I can promise that all will be made plain. The most upright person, as I now perceive can be led into suspicious positions.

My little man replied the gardener I will go with you no farther than the station house in the next street. The inspector no doubt will be glad to take a stroll with you as far as Eaton Place and have a bit of afternoon tea with your great acquaintances. Or would you prefer to go direct to the Home Secretary? Sir Thomas Vandeleur indeed! Perhaps you think I don't know a gentleman when I see one from a common run the hedge like you? Clothes or no clothes I can read you like a book. Here is a shirt that maybe cost as much as my Sunday hat and that coat I take it has never seen the inside of Rag fair and then your boots—

The man whose eyes had fallen upon the ground stopped short in his insulting commentary and remained for a moment looking intently upon some thing at his feet. When he spoke his voice was strangely altered.

What in God's name said he is all this?

Harry following the direction of the man's eyes beheld a spectacle that struck him dumb with terror and amazement. In his fall he had descended vertically upon the bandbox and burst it open from end to end thence a great treasure of diamonds had poured forth and now lay abroad part trodden in the soil part scattered on the surface in regal and glittering profusion. There was a magnificent coronet which he had often admired on Lady Vandeleur there were rings and brooches ear drops and bracelets and even unset brilliants rolling here and there among the rose bushes like drops of morning dew. A princely fortune lay between the two men upon the ground—a fortune in the most inviting solid and durable form capable of being carried in an apron beautiful in itself and scattering the sunlight in a million rainbow flashes.

Good God! said Harry I am lost!

His mind raced backwards into the past with the incalculable velocity of thought and he began to comprehend his day's adventures to conceive them as a whole and to recognise the sad imbroglio in which his own character and fortunes had become involved. He looked round him as if for help but he was alone in the garden with his scattered diamonds and his redoubtable interlocutor and when he gave ear there was no sound but the rustle of the leaves and the hurried pulsation of his heart. It was little wonder if the young man felt himself deserted by his spirit and with a broken voice repeated his last ejaculation—

I am lost!

The gardener peered in all directions with an air of guilt but there was no face at any of the windows and he seemed to breathe again

Pick up a heart, he said 'you fool! The worst of it is done Why could you not say at first there was enough for two? Two? he repeated aye and for two hundred! But come away from here where we may be observed, and, for the love of wisdom straighten out your hat and brush your clothes You could not travel two steps the figure of fun you look just now

While Harry mechanically adopted these suggestions the gardener getting upon his knees hastily drew together the scattered jewels and returned them to the bandbox The touch of these costly crystals sent a shiver of emotion through the man's stalwart frame, his face was transfigured and his eyes shone with concupiscence indeed it seemed as if he luxuriously prolonged his occupation and dallied with every diamond that he handled At last however it was done and concealing the bandbox in his smock the gardener beckoned to Harry and preceded him in the direction of the house

Near the door they were met by a young man evidently in holy orders, dark and strikingly handsome with a look of mingled weakness and resolution and very neatly attired after the manner of his caste The gardener was plainly annoyed by this encounter but he put as good a face upon it as he could and accosted the clergyman with an obsequious and smiling air

Here is a fine afternoon Mr Rolles said he a fine afternoon as sure as God made it! And here is a young friend of mine who had a fancy to look at my roses I took the liberty to bring him in, for I thought none of the lodgers would object

Speaking for myself replied the Reverend Mr Rolles I do not nor do I fancy any of the rest of us would be more difficult upon so small a matter The garden is your own Mr Raeburn we must none of us forget that and because you give us liberty to walk there we should be indeed ungracious if we so far presumed upon your politeness as to interfere with the convenience of your friends But on second thoughts he added I believe that this gentle man and I have met before Mr Hartley I think I regret to observe that you have had a fall

And he offered his hand

A sort of maiden dignity and a desire to delay as long as possible the necessity for explanation moved Harry to refuse this chance of help and to deny his own identity He chose the tender mercies of the gardener who was at least unknown to him rather than the curiosity and perhaps the doubts of an acquaintance

I fear there is some mistake, said he My name is Thomlinson and I am a friend of Mr Raeburn's

Indeed? said Mr Rolles 'The likeness is amazing

Mr Raeburn who had been upon thorns throughout this colloquy, now felt it high time to bring it to a period

I wish you a pleasant saunter sir said he

And with that he dragged Harry after him into the house and then into a chamber on the garden His first care was to draw down the blind for Mr

Rolles still remained where they had left him in an attitude of perplexity and thought. Then he emptied the broken bandbox on the table and stood before the treasure thus fully displayed with an expression of rapturous greed and rubbing his hands upon his thighs. For Harry the sight of the man's face under the influence of this base emotion added another pang to those he was already suffering. It seemed incredible that from his life of pure and delicate trifling he should be plunged in a breath among sordid and criminal relations. He could reproach his conscience with no sinful act, and yet he was now suffering the punishment of sin in its most acute and cruel forms—the dread of punishment, the suspicions of the good, and the companionship and contamination of vile and brutal natures. He felt he could lay his life down with gladness to escape from the room and the society of Mr. Raeburn.

And now,' said the latter, after he had separated the jewels into two nearly equal parts, and drawn one of them nearer to himself and now said he, 'everything in this world has to be paid for and somethings sweetly. You must know, Mr. Hartley if such be your name that I am a man of a very easy temper and good nature has been my stumbling block from first to last. I could pocket the whole of these pretty pebbles if I chose and I should like to see you dare to say a word but I think I must have taken a liking to you, for I declare I have not the heart to shave you so close. So do you see in pure kind feeling I propose that we divide and these, indicating the two heaps, are the portions that seem to me just and friendly. Do you see any objection, Mr. Hartley may I ask? I am not the man to stick upon a brooch.'

'But sir,' cried Harry, 'what you propose to me is impossible. The jewels are not mine and I cannot share what is another's no matter with whom nor in what proportions.'

'They are not yours are they not?' returned Raeburn. 'And you could not share them with anybody, couldn't you? Well now that is what I call a pity for here am I obliged to take you to the station. The police—think of that, he continued, think of the disgrace for your respectable parents think he went on taking Harry by the wrist think of the Colonies and the Day of Judgment.'

'I cannot help it,' wailed Harry. 'It is not my fault. You will not come with me to Eaton Place?'

No replied the man. 'I will not that is certain. And I mean to divide these playthings with you here.'

And so saying he applied a sudden and severe torsion to the lad's wrist.

Harry could not suppress a scream and the perspiration burst forth upon his face. Perhaps pain and terror quickened his intelligence but certainly at that moment the whole business flashed across him in another light and he saw that there was nothing for it but to accede to the ruffian's proposal and trust to find the house and force him to disgorge under more favorable circumstances and when he himself was clear from all suspicion.

I agree he said.

There is a lamb sneered the gardener. 'I thought you would recognize your interests at last. This bandbox he continued I shall burn with my rub-

bish, it is a thing that curious folk might recognise and as for you scrape up your gaieties and put them in your pocket

Harry proceeded to obey, Raeburn watching him and every now and again his greed rekindled by some bright scintillation abstracting another jewel from the secretary's share and adding it to his own

When this was finished both proceeded to the front door which Raeburn cautiously opened to observe the street. This was apparently clear of passengers, for he suddenly seized Harry by the nape of the neck and holding his face downward so that he could see nothing but the roadway and the door steps of the houses pushed him violently before him down one street and up another for the space of perhaps a minute and a half. Harry had counted three corners before the bully relaxed his grasp and crying 'Now be off with you!' sent the lad flying head foremost with a well directed and athletic kick.

When Harry gathered himself up half stunned and bleeding freely at the nose Mr Raeburn had entirely disappeared. For the first time anger and pain so completely overcame the lad's spirits that he burst into a fit of tears and remained sobbing in the middle of the road.

After he had thus somewhat assuaged his emotions he began to look about him and read the names of the streets at whose intersection he had been deserted by the gardener. He was still in an unfrequented portion of West London, among villas and large gardens but he could see some persons at a window who had evidently witnessed his misfortune, and almost immediately after a servant came running from the house and offered him a glass of water. At the same time a dirty rogue who had been slouching somewhere in the neighborhood drew near him from the other side.

'Poor fellow' said the maid 'how vilely you have been handled to be sure! Why your knees are all cut and your clothes ruined! Do you know the wretch who used you so?'

'That I do!' cried Harry who was somewhat refreshed by the water, and shall run him home in spite of his precautions. He shall pay dearly for this day's work I promise you.'

'You had better come into the house and have yourself washed and brushed' continued the maid. 'My mistress will make you welcome never fear. And see I will pick up your hat. Why, love of mercy!' she screamed, 'if you have not dropped diamonds all over the street!'

Such was the case a good half of what remained to him after the depredations of Mr Raeburn had been shaken out of his pockets by the summersault and once more lay glittering on the ground. He blessed his fortune that the maid had been so quick of eye, there is nothing so bad but it might be worse thought he and the recovery of these few seemed to him almost as great an affair as the loss of all the rest. But alas as he stooped to pick up his treasures the loiterer made a rapid onslaught overset both Harry and the maid with a movement of his arms swept up a double handful of the diamonds and made off along the street with an amazing swiftness.

Harry as soon as he could get upon his feet gave chase to the miscreant with many cries but the latter was too fleet of foot and probably too well

acquainted with the locality, for turn where the pursuer would he could find no traces of the fugitive

In the deepest despondency Harry revisited the scene of his mishap where the maid who was still waiting very honestly returned him his hat and the remainder of the fallen diamonds Harry thanked her from his heart and being now in no humour for economy made his way to the nearest cab stand and set for Eaton Place by coach

The house on his arrival seemed in some confusion as if a catastrophe had happened in the family, and the servants clustered together in the hall, and were unable or perhaps not altogether anxious to suppress their merriment at the tatterdemalion figure of the secretary He passed them with as good an air of dignity as he could assume and made directly for the boudoir When he opened the door an astonishing and even menacing spectacle presented itself to his eyes, for he beheld the General and his wife and of all people Charlie Pendragon closeted together and speaking with earnestness and gravity on some important subject Harry saw at once that there was little left for him to explain—plenary confession had plainly been made to the General of the intended fraud upon his pocket and the unfortunate miscarriage of the scheme and they had all made common cause against a common danger

‘Thank Heaven, cried Lady Vandeleur here he is! The bandbox, Harry—the bandbox’

But Harry stood before them silent and downcast

Speak! she cried ‘Speak! Where is the bandbox?’

And the men with threatening gestures repeated the demand

Harry drew a handful of jewels from his pocket He was very white

‘This is all that remains said he I declare before Heaven it was through no fault of mine and if you will have patience although some are lost I am afraid for ever others I am sure may be still recovered

Alas! cried Lady Vandeleur all our diamonds are gone and I owe ninety thousand pounds for dress!

Madam said the General you might have paved the gutter with your own trash you might have made debts to fifty times the sum you mention you might have robbed me of my mother’s coronet and ring and Nature might have still so far prevailed that I could have forgiven you at last But madam you have taken the Rajah’s Diamond—the Eye of Light, as the Orientals poetically termed it—the Pride of Kashgar! You have taken from me the Rajah’s Diamond he cried raising his hands and all madam all is at an end between us!

Believe me General Vandeleur’ she replied that is one of the most agreeable speeches that ever I heard from your lips and since we are to be ruined, I could almost welcome the change if it delivers me from you You have told me often enough that I married you for your money, let me tell you now that I always bitterly repented the bargain, and if you were still marriageable, and had a diamond bigger than your head I should counsel even my maid against a union so uninviting and disastrous As for you Mr Hartley she continued, turning on the secretary, you have sufficiently exhibited your valuable quali

ties in this house we are now persuaded that you equally lack manhood sense and self respect and I can see only one course open for you—to withdraw instanter and if possible return no more For your wages you may rank as a creditor in my late husband's bankruptcy

Harry had scarcely comprehended this insulting address before the General was down upon him with another

And in the meantime said that personage, follow me before the nearest Inspector of Police You may impose upon a simple minded soldier sir but the eye of the law will read your disreputable secret If I must spend my old age in poverty through your underhand intriguing with my wife, I mean at least that you shall not remain unpunished for your pains and God sir will deny me a very considerable satisfaction if you do not pick oakum from now until your dying day

With that the General dragged Harry from the apartment and hurried him downstairs and along the street to the police station of the district

Here (says my Arabian author) ended this deplorable business of the band box But to the unfortunate Secretary the whole affair was the beginning of a new and manlier life The police were easily persuaded of his innocence, and, after he had given what help he could in the subsequent investigations, he was even complimented by one of the chiefs of the detective department on his probity and simplicity of his behaviour Several persons interested themselves in one so unfortunate, and soon after he inherited a sum of money from a maiden aunt in Worcestershire With this he married Prudence, and set sail for Bendigo, or according to another account, for Trincomalee, exceedingly content, and with the best of prospects

STORY OF THE YOUNG MAN IN HOLY ORDERS

THE Reverend Mr Simon Rolles had distinguished himself in the Moral Sciences and was more than usually proficient in the study of Divinity His essay

On the Christian Doctrine of the Social Obligations obtained for him at the moment of its production a certain celebrity in the University of Oxford and it was understood in clerical and learned circles that young Mr Rolles had in contemplation a considerable work—a folio it was said—on the authority of the Fathers of the Church These attainments these ambitious designs however were far from helping him to any preferment and he was still in quest of his first curacy when a chance ramble in that part of London the peaceful and rich aspect of the garden a desire for solitude and study and the cheapness of the lodging led him to take up his abode with Mr Raeburn the nurseryman of Stockdove Lane

It was his habit every afternoon after he had worked seven or eight hours on St Ambrose or St Chrysostom to walk for a while in meditation among the roses And this was usually one of the most productive moments of his day But even a sincere appetite for thought and the excitement of grave prob-

lens awaiting solution, are not always sufficient to preserve the mind of the philosopher against the petty shocks and contacts of the world. And when Mr Rolles found General Vandeleur's secretary ragged and bleeding in the company of his landlord when he saw both change colour and seek to avoid his questions, and above all when the former denied his own identity with the most unmoved assurance he speedily forgot the Saints and Fathers in the vulgar interest of curiosity.

I cannot be mistaken thought he. That is Mr Hartley beyond a doubt. How comes he in such a pickle? why does he deny his name? and what can be his business with that black looking ruffian my landlord?

As he was thus reflecting another peculiar circumstance attracted his attention. The face of Mr Raeburn appeared at a low window next the door and as chance directed his eyes met those of Mr Rolles. The nurseryman seemed disconcerted and even alarmed, and immediately after the blind of the apartment was pulled sharply down.

'This may all be very well' reflected Mr Rolles. 'It may be all excellently well but I confess freely that I do not think so. Suspicious underhand untruthful fearful of observation—I believe upon my soul he thought, the pair are plotting some disgraceful action.'

The detective that there is in all of us awoke and became clamant in the bosom of Mr Rolles and with a brisk eager step that bore no resemblance to his usual gait he proceeded to make the circuit of the garden. When he came to the scene of Harry's escalade his eye was at once arrested by a broken rosebush and marks of trampling on the mould. He looked up and saw scratches on the brick and a rag of trouser floating from a broken bottle. This, then, was the mode of entrance chosen by Mr Raeburn's particular friend! It was thus that General Vandeleur's secretary came to admire a flower garden! The young clergyman whistled softly to himself as he stooped to examine the ground. He could make out where Harry had landed from his perilous leap. He recognised the flat foot of Mr Raeburn where it had sunk deeply in the soil as he pulled up the Secretary by the collar nay on a closer inspection he seemed to distinguish the marks of groping fingers as though something had been spilt abroad and eagerly collected.

Upon my word he thought the thing grows vastly interesting.'

And just then he caught sight of something almost entirely buried in the earth. In an instant he had disinterred a dainty morocco case ornamented and clasped in gilt. It had been trodden heavily underfoot and thus escaped the hurried search of Mr Raeburn. Mr Rolles opened the case and drew a long breath of almost horrified astonishment, for there lay before him in a cradle of green velvet a diamond of prodigious magnitude and of the finest water. It was of the bigness of a duck's egg beautifully shaped and without a flaw, and as the sun shone upon it it gave forth a lustre like that of electricity, and seemed to burn in his hand with a thousand internal fires.

He knew little of precious stones, but the Rajah's Diamond was a wonder that explained itself a village child if he found it would run screaming for the nearest cottage, and a savage would prostrate himself in adoration before

so imposing a fetish The beauty of the stone flattered the young clergyman's eyes the thought of its incalculable value overpowered his intellect He knew that what he held in his hand was worth more than many years purchase of an archiepiscopal see that it would build cathedrals more stately than Ely or Cologne that he who possessed it was set free for ever from the primal curse and might follow his own inclinations without concern or hurry without let or hindrance And as he suddenly turned it the rays leaped forth again with renewed brilliancy and seemed to pierce his very heart

Decisive actions are often taken in a moment and without any conscious deliverance from the rational parts of man So it was now with Mr Rolles He glanced hurriedly round beheld like Mr Raeburn before him nothing but the sunlit flower garden the tall tree tops and the house with blinded windows and in a trice he had shut the case thrust it into his pocket and was hastening to his study with the speed of guilt

The Reverend Simon Rolles had stolen the Rajah's Diamond

Early in the afternoon the police arrived with Harry Hartley The nurseryman who was beside himself with terror readily discovered his hoard and the jewels were identified and inventoried in the presence of the Secretary As for Mr Rolles he showed himself in a most obliging temper communicated what he knew with freedom and professed regret that he could do no more to help the officers in their duty

Still he added I suppose your business is nearly at an end

By no means replied the man from Scotland Yard and he narrated the second robbery of which Harry had been the immediate victim and gave the young clergyman a description of the more important jewels that were still not found dilating particularly on the Rajah's Diamond

'It must be worth a fortune observed Mr Rolles

'Ten fortunes—twenty fortunes cried the officer

The more it is worth remarked Simon shrewdly the more difficult it would be to sell Such a thing has a physiognomy not to be disguised and I should fancy a man might as easily negotiate St Paul's Cathedral

'Oh truly' said the officer, but if the thief be a man of any intelligence he will cut it into three or four, and there will be still enough to make him rich

"Thank you said the clergyman You cannot imagine how much your conversation interests me

Whereupon the functionary admitted that they knew many strange things in his profession and immediately after took his leave

Mr Rolles regained his apartment It seemed smaller and barer than usual, the materials for his great work had never presented so little interest and he looked upon his library with the eye of scorn He took down volume by volume several Fathers of the Church, and glanced them through, but they contained nothing to his purpose

These old gentlemen thought he are no doubt very valuable writers but they seem to me conspicuously ignorant of life Here am I with learning enough to be a Bishop and I positively do not know how to dispose of a stolen diamond I glean a hint from a common policeman, and, with all my folios,

I cannot so much as put it into execution This inspires me with very low ideas of University training

Herewith he kicked over his bookshelf and putting on his hat hastened from the house to the club of which he was a member In such a place of mundane resort he hoped to find some man of good counsel and a shrewd experience in life In the reading room he saw many of the country clergy and an Archdeacon there were three journalists and a writer upon the Higher Metaphysic playing pool and at dinner only the raff of ordinary club frequenters showed their commonplace and obliterated countenances None of these thought Mr Rolles would know more on dangerous topics than he knew himself none of them were fit to give him guidance in his present strait At length in the smoking room up many weary stairs he hit upon a gentle man of somewhat portly build and dressed with conspicuous plainness He was smoking a cigar and reading the *Fortnightly Review* his face was singularly free from all sign of preoccupation or fatigue and there was something in his air which seemed to invite confidence and to expect submission The more the young clergyman scrutinised his features the more he was convinced that he had fallen on one capable of giving pertinent advice

Sir said he you will excuse my abruptness but I judge you from your appearance to be pre eminently a man of the world

I have indeed considerable claims to that distinction replied the stranger, laying aside his magazine with a look of mingled amusement and surprise

I sir, continued the Curate am a recluse a student a creature of ink bottles and patristic folios A recent event has brought my folly vividly before my eyes and I desire to instruct myself in life By life he added I do not mean Thackeray's novels but the crimes and secret possibilities of our society and the principles of wise conduct among exceptional events I am a patient reader can the thing be learnt in books?

You put me in a difficulty said the stranger I confess I have no great notion of the use of books except to amuse a railway journey although I believe there are some very exact treatises on astronomy the use of the globes agriculture and the art of making paper flowers Upon the less apparent provinces of life I fear you will find nothing truthful Yet stay he added have you read Gaboriau?

Mr Rolles admitted he had never even heard the name

You may gather some notions from Gaboriau resumed the stranger He is at least suggestive and as he is an author much studied by Prince Bismarck, you will at the worst lose your time in good society

Sir said the Curate I am infinitely obliged by your politeness

You have already more than repaid me returned the other

'How?' inquired Simon

By the novelty of your request replied the gentleman and with a polite gesture as though to ask permission, he resumed the study of the *Fortnightly Review*

On his way home Mr Rolles purchased a work on precious stones and several of Gaboriau's novels These last he eagerly skimmed until an advanced

hour in the morning but although they introduced him to many new ideas he could nowhere discover what to do with a stolen diamond He was annoyed moreover to find the information scattered amongst romantic story-telling instead of soberly set forth after the manner of a manual and he concluded that even if the writer had thought much upon these subjects he was totally lacking in educational method For the character and attainments of Lecoq however he was unable to contain his admiration

He was truly a great creature ruminated Mr Rolles "He knew the world as I know Paley's Evidences There was nothing that he could not carry to a termination with his own hand and against the largest odds Heavens' he broke out suddenly is not this the lesson? Must I not learn to cut diamonds for myself?

It seemed to him as if he had sailed at once out of his perplexities he remembered that he knew a jeweller one B Macculloch in Edinburgh who would be glad to put him in the way of the necessary training a few months, perhaps a few years of sordid toil and he would be sufficiently expert to divide and sufficiently cunning to dispose with advantage of the Rajah's Diamond That done he might return to pursue his researches at leisure a wealthy and luxurious student envied and respected by all Golden visions attended him through his slumber and he awoke refreshed and light hearted with the morning sun

Mr Raeburn's house was on that day to be closed by the police and this afforded a pretext for his departure He cheerfully prepared his baggage transported it to King's Cross where he left it in the cloak room and returned to the club to while away the afternoon and dine

If you dine here to day Rolles observed an acquaintance you may see two of the most remarkable men in England—Prince Florizel of Bohemia and old Jack Vandeleur

I have heard of the Prince replied Mr Rolles, 'and General Vandeleur I have even met in society

General Vandeleur is an ass' returned the other "This is his brother John, the biggest adventurer the best judge of precious stones and one of the most acute diplomatists in Europe Have you never heard of his duel with the Duc de Val d'Orge³ of his exploits and atrocities when he was Dictator of Paraguay³ of his dexterity in recovering Sir Samuel Levi's jewellery³ nor of his services in the Indian Mutiny—services by which the Government profited but which the Government dared not recognise³ You make me wonder what we mean by fame or even by infamy for Jack Vandeleur has prodigious claims to both Run downstairs he continued take a table near them and keep your ears open You will hear some strange talk or I am much misled

But how shall I know them³ inquired the clergyman

Know them³ cried his friend, why the Prince is the finest gentleman in Europe the only living creature who looks like a king and as for Jack Vandeleur, if you can imagine Ulysses at seventy years of age and with a sabre-cut across his face you have the man before you! Know them, indeed! Why you could pick either of them out of a Derby day¹

Rolles eagerly hurried to the dining room. It was as his friend had asserted, it was impossible to mistake the pair in question. Old John Vandeleur was of a remarkable force of body and obviously broken to the most difficult exercises. He had neither the carriage of a swordsman nor of a sailor nor yet of one much inured to the saddle, but something made up of all these, and the result and expression of many different habits and dexterities. His features were bold and aquiline, his expression arrogant and predatory; his whole appearance that of a swift violent unscrupulous man of action and his copious white hair and the deep sabre-cut that traversed his nose and temple added a note of savagery to a head already remarkable and menacing in itself.

In his companion, the Prince of Bohemia Mr. Rolles was astonished to recognise the gentleman who had recommended him the study of Gaboriau. Doubtless Prince Florizel, who rarely visited the club of which as of most others he was an honorary member, had been waiting for John Vandeleur when Simon accosted him on the previous evening.

The other diners had modestly retired into the angles of the room and left the distinguished pair in a certain isolation but the young clergyman was unrestrained by any sentiment of awe, and, marching boldly up, took his place at the nearest table.

The conversation was, indeed new to the student's ears. The ex-Dictator of Paraguay stated many extraordinary experiences in different quarters of the world, and the Prince supplied a commentary which to a man of thought, was even more interesting than the events themselves. Two forms of experience were thus brought together and laid before the young clergyman, and he did not know which to admire the most—the desperate actor or the skilled expert in life the man who spoke boldly of his own deeds and perils or the man who seemed like a god, to know all things and to have suffered nothing. The manner of each aptly fitted with his part in the discourse. The Dictator indulged in brutalities alike of speech and gesture his hand opened and shut and fell roughly on the table and his voice was loud and heavy. The Prince on the other hand seemed the very type of urbane docility and quiet, the least movement, the least inflection had with him a weightier significance than all the shouts and pantomime of his companion and if ever as must frequently have been the case he described some experience personal to himself, it was so aptly dissimulated as to pass unnoticed with the rest.

At length the talk wandered on to the late robberies and the Rajah's Diamond.

"That diamond would be better in the sea" observed Prince Florizel.

"As a Vandeleur replied the Dictator, "your Highness may imagine my dissent."

"I speak on grounds of public policy," pursued the Prince. Jewels so valuable should be reserved for the collection of a Prince or the treasury of a great nation. To hand them about among the common sort of men is to set a price on Virtue's head and if the Rajah of Kashgar—a Prince, I understand of great enlightenment—desired vengeance upon the men of Europe he could hardly have gone more efficaciously about his purpose than by sending us this apple."

of discord There is no honesty too robust for such a trial I myself who have many duties and many privileges of my own—I myself Mr Vandeleur could scarce handle the intoxicating crystal and be safe As for you who are a diamond hunter by taste and profession I do not believe there is a crime in the calendar you would not perpetrate—I do not believe you have a friend in the world whom you would not eagerly betray—I do not know if you have a family but if you have I declare you would sacrifice your children—and all this for what? Not to be richer nor to have more comforts or more respect, but simply to call this diamond yours for a year or two until you die and now and again to open a safe and look at it as one looks at a picture

'It is true replied Vandeleur I have hunted most things from men and women down to mosquitoes I have dived for coral, I have followed both whales and tigers and a diamond is the tallest quarry of the lot It has beauty and worth it alone can properly reward the ardours of the chase At this moment, as your Highness may fancy I am upon the trail I have a sure knack a wide experience I know every stone of price in my brother's collection as a shepherd knows his sheep, and I wish I may die if I do not recover them every one'

Sir Thomas Vandeleur will have great cause to thank you' said the Prince
'I am not so sure returned the Dictator with a laugh One of the Vandeleurs will Thomas or John—Peter or Paul—we are all apostles

'I did not catch your observation said the Prince with some disgust

And at the same moment the waiter informed Mr Vandeleur that his cab was at the door

Mr Rolles glanced at the clock, and saw that he also must be moving, and the coincidence struck him sharply and unpleasantly for he desired to see no more of the diamond hunter

Much study having somewhat shaken the young man's nerves he was in the habit of travelling in the most luxurious manner, and for the present journey he had taken a sofa in the sleeping carriage

"You will be very comfortable said the guard, there is no one in your compartment and only one old gentleman in the other end

It was close upon the hour and the tickets were being examined wher Mr Rolles beheld this other fellow passenger ushered by several porters into his place certainly, there was not another man in the world whom he would not have preferred—for it was old John Vandeleur the ex Dictator

The sleeping carriages on the Great Northern line were divided into three compartments—one at each end for travellers and one in the centre fitted with the conveniences of a lavatory A door running in grooves separated each of the others from the lavatory but as there were neither bolts nor locks the whole suite was practically common ground

When Mr Rolles had studied his position he perceived himself without defence If the Dictator chose to pay him a visit in the course of the night, he could do no less than receive it he had no means of fortification and lay open to attack as if he had been lying in the fields This situation caused him some agony of mind He recalled with alarm the boastful statements of his fellow

traveller across the dining table and the professions of immorality which he had heard him offering to the disgusted Prince Some persons he remembered to have read are endowed with a singular quickness of perception for the neighbourhood of precious metals through walls and even at considerable distances they are said to divine the presence of gold Might it not be the same with diamonds? he wondered and if so who was more likely to enjoy this transcendental sense than the person who gloried in the appellation of the Diamond Hunter? From such a man he recognised that he had everything to fear and longed eagerly for the arrival of the day

In the meantime he neglected no precaution concealed his diamond in the most internal pocket of a system of greatcoats and devoutly recommended himself to the care of Providence

The train pursued its usual even and rapid course and nearly half the journey had been accomplished before slumber began to triumph over uneasiness in the breast of Mr Rolles For some time he resisted its influence but it grew upon him more and more and a little before York he was fain to stretch himself upon one of the couches and suffer his eyes to close and almost at the same instant consciousness deserted the young clergyman His last thought was of his terrifying neighbour

When he awoke it was still pitch dark except for the flicker of the veiled lamp and the continual roaring and oscillation testified to the unrelaxed velocity of the train He sat upright in a panic for he had been tormented by the most uneasy dreams it was some seconds before he recovered his self command and even after he had resumed a recumbent attitude sleep continued to flee him and he lay awake with his brain in a state of violent agitation, and his eyes fixed upon the lavatory door He pulled his clerical felt hat over his brow still farther to shield him from the light and he adopted the usual expedients such as counting a thousand or banishing thought by which experienced invalids are accustomed to woo the approach of sleep In the case of Mr Rolles they proved one and all vain he was harassed by a dozen different anxieties—the old man in the other end of the carriage haunted him in the most alarming shapes and in whatever attitude he chose to lie the diamond in his pocket occasioned him a sensible physical distress It burned it was too large it bruised his ribs and there were infinitesimal fractions of a second in which he had half a mind to throw it from the window

While he was thus lying a strange incident took place

The sliding door into the lavatory stirred a little and then a little more and was finally drawn back for the space of about twenty inches The lamp in the lavatory was unshaded and in the lighted aperture thus disclosed Mr Rolles could see the head of Mr Vandeleur in an attitude of deep attention He was conscious that the gaze of the Dictator rested intently on his own face, and the instinct of self preservation moved him to hold his breath to refrain from the least movement and keeping his eyes lowered to watch his visitor from underneath the lashes After about a moment the head was withdrawn and the door of the lavatory replaced

The Dictator had not come to attack, but to observe his action was not that

of a man threatening another but that of a man who was himself threatened, if Mr Rolles was afraid of him it appeared that he in his turn, was not quite easy on the score of Mr Rolles He had come it would seem to make sure that his only fellow traveller was asleep, and when satisfied on the point, he had at once withdrawn

The clergyman leaped to his feet The extreme of terror had given place to a reaction of foolhardy daring He reflected that the rattle of the flying train concealed all other sounds and determined come what might to return the visit he had just received Divesting himself of his cloak which might have interfered with the freedom of his action he entered the lavatory and paused to listen As he had expected there was nothing to be heard above the roar of the train's progress and laying his hand on the door at the farther side he proceeded cautiously to draw it back for about six inches Then he stopped, and could not contain an ejaculation of surprise

John Vandeleur wore a fur travelling cap with lappets to protect his ears, and this may have combined with the sound of the express to keep him in ignorance of what was going forward It is certain at least that he did not raise his head but continued without interruption to pursue his strange employment Between his feet stood an open hat box in one hand he held the sleeve of his sealskin greatcoat in the other a formidable knife with which he had just slit up the lining of the sleeve Mr Rolles had read of persons carrying morey in a belt and as he had no acquaintance with any but cricket belts he had never been able rightly to conceive how this was managed But here was a stranger thing before his eyes for John Vandeleur it appeared carried diamonds in the lining of his sleeve, and even as the young clergyman gazed, he could see one glittering brilliant drop after another into the hat-box

He stood riveted to the spot following this unusual business with his eyes The diamonds were for the most part small and not easily distinguishable either in shape or fire Suddenly the Dictator appeared to find a difficulty, he employed both hands and stooped over his task but it was not until after considerable manœuvring that he extricated a large tiara of diamonds from the lining and held it up for some seconds examination before he placed it with the others in the hat box The tiara was a ray of light to Mr Rolles he immediately recognised it for a part of the treasure stolen from Harry Hartley by the loiterer There was no room for mistake it was exactly as the detective had described it there were the ruby stars with a great emerald in the centre, there were the interlacing crescents and there were the pear shaped pendants, each a single stone which gave a special value to Lady Vandeleur's tiara

Mr Rolles was hugely relieved The Dictator was as deeply in the affair as he was neither could tell tales upon the other In the first glow of happiness the clergyman suffered a deep sigh to escape him and as his bosom had become choked and his throat dry during his previous suspense the sigh was followed by a cough

Mr Vandeleur looked up his face contracted with the blackest and most deadly passion his eyes opened widely and his under jaw dropped in an astonishment that was upon the brink of fury By an instinctive movement he

had covered the hat box with the coat For half a minute the two men stared upon each other in silence It was not a long interval but it sufficed for Mr Rolles he was one of those who think swiftly on dangerous occasions he decided on a course of action of a singularly daring nature and although he felt he was setting his life upon the hazard, he was the first to break silence

I beg your pardon' said he

The Dictator shivered slightly and when he spoke his voice was hoarse

What do you want here? he asked

I take a particular interest in diamonds replied Mr Rolles with an air of perfect self possession Two connoisseurs should be acquainted I have here a trifle of my own which may perhaps serve for an introduction

And so saying, he quietly took the case from his pocket showed the Rajahs Diamond to the Dictator for an instant and replaced it in security

'It was once your brother's ' he added

John Vandeleur continued to regard him with a look of almost painful amazement but he neither spoke nor moved

I was pleased to observe, resumed the young man that we have gems from the same collection'

The Dictator's surprise overpowered him

I beg your pardon he said I begin to perceive that I am growing old I am positively not prepared for little incidents like this But set my mind at rest upon one point do my eyes deceive me or are you indeed a parson?

I am in holy orders answered Mr Rolles

'Well ' cried the other, as long as I live I will never hear another word against the cloth'

You flatter me" said Mr Rolles

"Pardon me, replied Vandeleur, 'pardon me young man You are no coward but it still remains to be seen whether you are not the worst of fools Perhaps he continued leaning back upon his seat perhaps you would oblige me with a few particulars I must suppose you had some object in the stupefying impudence of your proceedings and I confess I have a curiosity to know it

It is very simple" replied the clergyman, 'it proceeds from my great inexperience of life

I shall be glad to be persuaded" answered Vandeleur

Whereupon Mr Rolles told him the whole story of his connection with the Rajah's Diamond from the time he found it in Raeburn's garden to the time when he left London in the Flying Scotchman He added a brief sketch of his feelings and thoughts during the journey and concluded in these words —

When I recognised the tiara I knew we were in the same attitude towards Society and this inspired me with a hope which I trust you will say was not ill founded that you might become in some sense my partner in the difficulties and of course the profits of my situation To one of your special knowledge and obviously great experience the negotiation of the diamond would give but little trouble while to me it was a matter of impossibility On the other part, I judged that I might lose nearly as much by cutting the diamond and that

not improbably with an unskilled hand as might enable me to pay you with proper generosity for your assistance The subject was a delicate one to broach and perhaps I fell short in delicacy But I must ask you to remember that for me the situation was a new one and I was entirely unacquainted with the etiquette in use I believe without vanity that I could have married or baptized you in a very acceptable manner, but every man has his own aptitudes and this sort of bargain was not among the list of my accomplishments

I do not wish to flatter you, replied Vandeleur, but upon my word, you have an unusual disposition for a life of crime You have more accomplishments than you imagine and though I have encountered a number of rogues in different quarters of the world I never met with one so unblushing as yourself Cheer up Mr Rolles you are in the right profession at last! As for helping you, you may command me as you will I have only a day's business in Edinburgh on a little matter for my brother and once that is concluded I return to Paris where I usually reside If you please you may accompany me thither And before the end of a month I believe I shall have brought your little business to a satisfactory conclusion'

(At this point contrary to all the canons of his art, our Arabian author breaks off the STORY OF THE YOUNG MAN IN HOLY ORDERS I regret and condemn such practices, but I must follow my original, and refer the reader for the conclusion of Mr Rolles' adventures to the next number of the cycle, the STORY OF THE HOUSE WITH THE GREEN BLINDS)

STORY OF THE HOUSE WITH THE GREEN BLINDS

FRANCIS SCRYSMGEOUR, a clerk in the Bank of Scotland at Edinburgh, had attained the age of twenty-five in a sphere of quiet creditable and domestic life His mother died while he was young but his father, a man of sense and probity had given him an excellent education at school, and brought him up at home to orderly and frugal habits Francis who was of a docile and affectionate disposition profited by these advantages with zeal and devoted himself heart and soul to his employment A walk upon Saturday afternoon an occasional dinner with members of his family and a yearly tour of a fortnight in the Highlands or even on the continent of Europe, were his principal diversions and he grew rapidly in favour with his superiors and enjoyed already a salary of nearly two hundred pounds a year with the prospect of an ultimate advance to almost double that amount Few young men were more contented few more willing and laborious than Francis Scrymgeour Some times at night, when he had read the daily papers he would play upon the flute to amuse his father for whose qualities he entertained a great respect

One day he received a note from a well known firm of Writers to the Signet, requesting the favour of an immediate interview with him The letter was marked 'Private and Confidential' and had been addressed to him at the bank instead of at home—two unusual circumstances which made him obey the

summons with the more alacrity The senior member of the firm a man of much austerity of manner made him gravely welcome requested him to take a seat and proceeded to explain the matter in hand in the picked expressions of a veteran man of business A person who must remain nameless, but of whom the lawyer had every reason to think well—a man, in short of some station in the country—desired to make Francis an annual allowance of five hundred pounds The capital was to be placed under the control of the lawyer's firm and two trustees who must also remain anonymous There were conditions annexed to this liberality but he was of opinion that his new client would find nothing either excessive or dishonourable in the terms and he repeated these two words with emphasis, as though he desired to commit himself to nothing more

Francis asked their nature

The conditions said the Writer to the Signet, 'are, as I have twice remarked neither dishonourable nor excessive At the same time I cannot conceal from you that they are most unusual Indeed the whole case is very much out of our way and I should certainly have refused it had it not been for the reputation of the gentleman who entrusted it to my care and let me add, Mr Scrymgeour the interest I have been led to take in yourself by many complimentary and I have no doubt well deserved reports"

Francis entreated him to be more specific

You cannot picture my uneasiness as to these conditions, he said

They are two replied the lawyer only two and the sum, as you will remember is five hundred a year—and unburdened I forgot to add, unburdened

And the lawyer raised his eyebrows at him with solemn gusto

'The first he resumed is of remarkable simplicity You must be in Paris by the afternoon of Sunday the 15th there you will find at the box office of the Comedie Française a ticket for admission taken in your name and waiting you You are requested to sit out the whole performance in the seat provided, and that is all

I should certainly have preferred a week day, replied Francis But, after all once in a way—

And in Paris my dear sir ' added the lawyer soothingly 'I believe I am something of a precision myself but upon such a consideration and in Paris I should not hesitate an instant

And the pair laughed pleasantly together

The other is of more importance continued the Writer to the Signet It regards your marriage My client taking a deep interest in your welfare desires to advise you absolutely in the choice of a wife Absolutely you understand he repeated

Let us be more explicit if you please returned Francis Am I to marry any one maid or widow, black or white whom this invisible person chooses to propose?

I was to assure you that suitability of age and position should be a principle with your benefactor replied the lawyer As to race I confess the difficulty

had not occurred to me and I failed to inquire but if you like I will make a note of it at once and advise you on the earliest opportunity'

'Sir, said Francis 'it remains to be seen whether this whole affair is not a most unworthy fraud The circumstances are inexplicable—I had almost said incredible, and until I see a little more daylight and some plausible motive, I confess I should be very sorry to put a hand to the transaction I appeal to you in this difficulty for information I must learn what is at the bottom of it all If you do not know cannot guess or are not at liberty to tell me, I shall take my hat and go back to my bank as I came

"I do not know," answered the lawyer, 'but I have an excellent guess Your father, and no one else is at the root of this apparently unnatural business'

'My father' cried Francis in extreme disdain 'Worthy man, I know every thought of his mind every penny of his fortune'

"You misinterpret my words" said the lawyer 'I do not refer to Mr Scrymgeour senior for he is not your father When he and his wife came to Edinburgh you were already nearly one year old and you had not yet been three months in their care The secret has been well kept, but such is the fact Your father is unknown and I say again that I believe him to be the original of the offers I am charged at present to transmit to you'

It would be impossible to exaggerate the astonishment of Francis Scrymgeour at his unexpected information He pled this confusion to the lawyer

'Sir said he after a piece of news so startling, you must grant me some hours of thought You shall know this evening what conclusion I have reached'

The lawyer commended his prudence and Francis excusing himself upon some pretext at the bank took a long walk into the country and fully considered the different steps and aspects of the case A pleasant sense of his own importance rendered him the more deliberate but the issue was from the first not doubtful His whole carnal man leaned irresistibly towards the five hundred a year and the strange conditions with which it was burdened, he discovered in his heart an invincible repugnance to the name of Scrymgeour which he had never hitherto disliked, he began to despise the narrow and unromantic interests of his former life, and when once his mind was fairly made up he walked with a new feeling of strength and freedom and nourished himself with the gayest anticipations

He said but a word to the lawyer and immediately received a cheque for two quarters arrears, for the allowance was ante-dated from the first of January With this in his pocket he walked home The flat in Scotland Street looked mean in his eyes his nostrils for the first time, rebelled against the odour of broth and he observed little defects of manner in his adoptive father which filled him with surprise and almost with disgust The next day he determined should see him on his way to Paris

In that city where he arrived long before the appointed date he put up at a modest hotel frequented by English and Italians and devoted himself to improvement in the French tongue, for this purpose he had a master twice a week entered into conversation with loiterers in the Champs Elysees and nightly frequented the theatre He had his whole toilette fashionably renewed

and was shaved and had his hair dressed every morning by a barber in a neighbouring street This gave him something of a foreign air, and seemed to wipe off the reproach of his past years

At length on the Saturday afternoon he betook himself to the box office of the theatre in the Rue Richelieu No sooner had he mentioned his name than the clerk produced the order in an envelope of which the address was scarcely dry

It has been taken this moment" said the clerk

Indeed" said Francis May I ask what the gentleman was like?"

Your friend is easy to describe replied the official He is old and strong and beautiful with white hair and a sabre cut across his face You cannot fail to recognise so marked a person

No indeed returned Francis and I thank you for your politeness'

He cannot yet be far distant, added the clerk If you make haste you might still overtake him

Francis did not wait to be twice told he ran precipitately from the theatre into the middle of the street and looked in all directions More than one white haired man was within sight, but though he overtook each of them in succession all wanted the sabre cut For nearly half an hour he tried one street after another in the neighbourhood until at length recognising the folly of continued search he started on a walk to compose his agitated feelings for this proximity of an encounter with him to whom he could not doubt he owed the day had profoundly moved the young man

It chanced that his way lay up the Rue Drouot and thence up the Rue des Martyrs and chance in this case served him better than all the forethought in the world For on the outer boulevard he saw two men in earnest colloquy upon a seat One was dark young and handsome secularly dressed but with an indelible clerical stamp the other answered in every particular to the description given him by the clerk Francis felt his heart beat high in his bosom he knew he was now about to hear the voice of his father and making a wide circuit he noiselessly took his place behind the couple in question, who were too much interested in their talk to observe much else As Francis had expected the conversation was conducted in the English language

Your suspicions begin to annoy me Rolles said the older man I tell you I am doing my utmost a man cannot lay his hand on millions in a moment Have I not taken you up a mere stranger out of pure good-will? Are you not living largely on my bounty?

On your advances Mr Vandeleur' corrected the other

'Advances if you choose and interest instead of good will if you prefer it,' returned Vandeleur angrily I am not here to pick expressions Business is business, and your business let me remind you is too muddy for such airs Trust me or leave me alone and find some one else, but let us have an end, for God's sake of your jérémauds

I am beginning to learn the world replied the other and I see that you have every reason to play me false, and not one to deal honestly I am not here to pick expressions either you wish the diamond for yourself you know you

do—you dare not deny it Have you not already forged my name, and searched my lodging in my absence? I understand the cause of your delays, you are lying in wait, you are the diamond hunter forsooth and sooner or later by fair means or foul you'll lay your hands upon it I tell you it must stop, push me much further and I promise you a surprise

"It does not become you to use threats" returned Vandeleur Two can play at that My brother is here in Paris the police are on the alert, and if you persist in wearying me with your caterwauling, I will arrange a little astonishment for you, Mr Rolles But mine shall be once and for all Do you understand, or would you prefer me to tell it you in Hebrew? There is an end to all things, and you have come to the end of my patience Tuesday, at seven not a day, not an hour sooner, not the least part of a second, if it were to save your life And if you do not choose to wait you may go to the bottomless pit for me and welcome

And so saying the Dictator arose from the bench and marched off in the direction of Montmartre, shaking his head and swinging his cane with a most furious air, while his companion remained where he was, in an attitude of great dejection

Francis was at the pitch of surprise and horror his sentiments had been shocked to the last degree the hopeful tenderness with which he had taken his place upon the bench was transformed into repulsion and despair, old Mr Scrymgeour he reflected was a far more kindly and creditable parent than this dangerous and violent intriguer, but he retained his presence of mind and suffered not a moment to elapse before he was on the trail of the Dictator

That gentleman's fury carried him forward at a brisk pace, and he was so completely occupied in his angry thoughts that he never so much as cast a look behind him till he reached his own door

His house stood high up in the Rue Lepic commanding a view of all Paris and enjoying the pure air of the heights It was two storeys high with green blinds and shutters and all the windows looking down on the street were hermetically closed Tops of trees showed over the high garden wall, and the wall was protected by *chevaux de-frise* The Dictator paused a moment while he searched his pocket for a key, and then opening a gate, disappeared within the enclosure

Francis looked about him the neighbourhood was very lonely the house isolated in its garden It seemed as if his observation must here come to an abrupt end A second glance however, showed him a tall house next door presenting a gable to the garden and in this gable a single window He passed to the front and saw a ticket offering unfurnished lodgings by the month, and, on inquiry the room which commanded the Dictator's garden proved to be one of those to let Francis did not hesitate a moment, he took the room, paid an advance upon the rent and returned to his hotel to seek his baggage

The old man with the sabre-cut might or might not be his father, he might or might not be upon the true scent, but he was certainly on the edge of an exciting mystery and he promised himself that he would not relax his observation until he had got to the bottom of the secret

From the window of his new apartment Francis Scrymgeour commanded a complete view into the garden of the house with the green blinds Immediately below him a very comely chestnut with wide boughs sheltered a pair of rustic tables where people might dine in the height of summer On all sides save one a dense vegetation concealed the soil, but there between the tables and the house he saw a patch of gravel walk leading from the verandah to the garden gate Studying the place from between the boards of the Venetian shutters which he durst not open for fear of attracting attention Francis observed but little to indicate the manners of the inhabitants and that little argued no more than a close reserve and a taste for solitude The garden was conventional the house had the air of a prison The green blinds were all drawn down upon the outside the door into the verandah was closed the garden as far as he could see it, was left entirely to itself in the evening sunshine A modest curl of smoke from a single chimney alone testified to the presence of living people.

In order that he might not be entirely idle and to give a certain colour to his way of life Francis had purchased Euclid's Geometry in French which he set himself to copy and translate on the top of his portmanteau and seated on the floor against the wall for he was equally without chair or table From time to time he would rise and cast a glance into the enclosure of the house with the green blinds, but the windows remained obstinately closed and the garden empty

Only late in the evening did anything occur to reward his continued attention Between nine and ten the sharp tinkle of a bell aroused him from a fit of dozing and he sprang to his observatory in time to hear an important noise of locks being opened and bars removed, and to see Mr Vandeleur carrying a lantern and clothed in a flowing robe of black velvet with a skull cap to match issue from under the verandah and proceed leisurely towards the garden gate The sound of bolts and bars was then repeated and a moment after Francis perceived the Dictator escorting into the house in the mobile light of the lantern an individual of the lowest and most despicable appearance.

Half an hour afterwards the visitor was reconducted to the street and Mr Vandeleur setting his light upon one of the rustic tables, finished a cigar with a great deliberation under the foliage of the chestnut Francis peering through a clear space among the leaves was able to follow his gestures as he threw away the ash or enjoyed a copious inhalation and beheld a cloud upon the old man's brow and a forcible action of the lips which testified to some deep and probably painful train of thought The cigar was already almost at an end, when the voice of a young girl was heard suddenly crying the hour from the interior of the house

In a moment replied John Vandeleur

And with that, he threw away the stump and, taking up the lantern sailed away under the verandah for the night As soon as the door was closed absolute darkness fell upon the house, Francis might try his eyesight as much as he pleased he could not detect so much as a single chunk of light below a blind, and he concluded, with great good sense, that the bed chambers were all upon the other side

Early the next morning (for he was early awake after an uncomfortable night upon the floor) he saw cause to adopt a different explanation The blinds rose one after another by means of a spring in the interior and disclosed steel shutters such as we see on the front of shops these in their turn were rolled up by a similar contrivance and for the space of about an hour the chambers were left open to the morning air At the end of that time Mr Vandeleur, with his own hand once more closed the shutters and replaced the blinds from within

While Francis was still marvelling at these precautions the door opened and a young girl came forth to look about her in the garden It was not two minutes before she re entered the house but even in that short time he saw enough to convince him that she possessed the most unusual attractions His curiosity was not only highly excited by this incident but his spirits were improved to a still more notable degree The alarming manners and more than equivocal life of his father ceased from that moment to prey upon his mind from that moment he embraced his new family with ardour and whether the young lady should prove his sister or his wife he felt convinced she was an angel in disguise So much was this the case that he was seized with a sudden horror when he reflected how little he really knew and how possible it was that he had followed the wrong person when he followed Mr Vandeleur

The porter whom he consulted could afford him little information but such as it was it had a mysterious and questionable sound The person next door was an English gentleman of extraordinary wealth and proportionately eccentric in his tastes and habits He possessed great collections which he kept in the house beside him and it was to protect these that he had fitted the place with steel shutters elaborate fastenings and *chevaux de-frise* along the garden wall He lived much alone in spite of some strange visitors with whom it seemed he had business to transact and there was no one else in the house except Mademoiselle and an old woman servant

Is Mademoiselle his daughter? inquired Francis

Certainly replied the porter Mademoiselle is the daughter of the house and strange it is to see how she is made to work For all his riches it is she who goes to market and every day in the week you may see her going by with a basket on her arm

And the collections? asked the other

Sir said the man they are immensely valuable More I cannot tell you Since M de Vandeleur's arrival no one in the quarter has so much as passed the door

Suppose not returned Francis "you must surely have some notion what these famous galleries contain Is it pictures silks statues jewels or what?"

My faith sir said the fellow with a shrug it might be carrots and still I could not tell you How should I know? The house is kept like a garrison, as you perceive

And then as Francis was returning disappointed to his room, the porter called him back

I have just remembered, sir, said he M de Vandeleur has been in all

parts of the world and I once heard the old woman declare that he had brought many diamonds back with him If that be the truth, there must be a fine show behind those shutters'

By an early hour on Sunday Francis was in his place at the theatre The seat which had been taken for him was only two or three numbers from the left hand side and directly opposite one of the lower boxes As the seat had been specially chosen there was doubtless something to be learned from its position, and he judged by an instinct that the box upon his right was in some way or other to be connected with the drama in which he ignorantiy played a part Indeed it was so situated that its occupants could safely observe him from beginning to end of the piece, if they were so minded while profiting by the depth, they could screen themselves sufficiently well from any counter examination on his side He promised himself not to leave it for a moment out of sight and whilst he scanned the rest of the theatre or made a show of attending to the business of the stage, he always kept a corner of an eye upon the empty box

The second act had been some time in progress and was even drawing towards a close when the door opened and two persons entered and ensconced themselves in the darkest of the shade Francis could hardly control his emotion It was Mr Vandeleur and his daughter The blood came and went in his arteries and veins with stunning activity his ears sang, his head turned He dared not look lest he should awake suspicion his play bill, which he kept reading from end to end and over and over again turned from white to red before his eyes and when he cast a glance upon the stage it seemed incalculably far away and he found the voices and gestures of the actors to the last degree impertinent and absurd

From time to time he risked a momentary look in the direction which principally interested him, and once at least he felt certain that his eyes encountered those of the young girl A shock passed over his body and he saw all the colours of the rainbow What would he not have given to overhear what passed between the Vandeleurs? What would he not have given for the courage to take up his opera glass and steadily inspect their attitude and expression? There for aught he knew his whole life was being decided—and he not able to interfere not able even to follow the debate, but condemned to sit and suffer where he was in impotent anxiety

At last the act came to an end The curtain fell and the people around him began to leave their places for the interval It was only natural that he should follow their example and if he did so it was not only natural but necessary that he should pass immediately in front of the box in question Summoning all his courage but keeping his eyes lowered Francis drew near the spot His progress was slow for the old gentleman before him moved with incredible deliberation, wheezing as he went What was he to do? Should he address the Vandeleurs by name as he went by? Should he take the flower from his button hole and throw it into the box? Should he raise his face and direct one long and affectionate look upon the lady who was either his sister or his betrothed? As he found himself thus struggling among so many alternatives he had a

vision of his old equitable existence in the bank, and was assailed by a thought of regret for the past

By this time he had arrived directly opposite the box, and although he was still undetermined what to do or whether to do anything, he turned his head and lifted his eyes No sooner had he done so than he uttered a cry of disappointment and remained rooted to the spot The box was empty During his slow advance Mr Vandeleur and his daughter had quietly slipped away

A polite person in his rear reminded him that he was stopping the path and he moved on again with mechanical footsteps and suffered the crowd to carry him unresisting out of the theatre Once in the street the pressure ceasing he came to a halt and the cool night air speedily restored him to the possession of his faculties He was surprised to find that his head ached violently and that he remembered not one word of the two acts which he had witnessed As the excitement wore away it was succeeded by an overweening appetite for sleep and he hailed a cab and drove to his lodging in a state of extreme exhaustion and some disgust of life

Next morning he lay in wait for Miss Vandeleur on her road to market and by eight o'clock beheld her stepping down a lane She was simply and even poorly attired but in the carriage of her head and body there was something flexible and noble that would have lent distinction to the meanest toilette Even her basket so aptly did she carry it became her like an ornament It seemed to Francis as he slipped into a doorway that the sunshine followed and the shadows fled before her as she walked, and he was conscious for the first time, of a bird singing in a cage above the lane

He suffered her to pass the doorway and then coming forth once more addressed her by name from behind

Miss Vandeleur said he

She turned and when she saw who he was became deadly pale

Pardon me, he continued Heaven knows I had no will to startle you and, indeed there should be nothing startling in the presence of one who wishes you so well as I do And believe me I am acting rather from necessity than choice We have many things in common and I am sadly in the dark There is much that I should be doing and my hands are tied I do not know even what to feel nor who are my friends and enemies

She found her voice with an effort

I do not know who you are she said

"Ah yes! Miss Vandeleur you do returned Francis, 'better than I do myself Indeed it is on that above all that I seek light Tell me what you know he pleaded Tell me who I am who you are and how our destinies are intermixed Give me a little help with my life Miss Vandeleur—only a word or two to guide me only the name of my father if you will—and I shall be grateful and content

I will not attempt to deceive you she replied 'I know who you are, but I am not at liberty to say

Tell me at least that you have forgiven my presumption and I shall wait with all the patience I have he said If I am not to know I must do without

It is cruel, but I can bear no more upon a push Only do not add to my troubles the thought that I have made an enemy of you

You did only what was natural she said, and I have nothing to forgive you Farewell

Is it to be *farewell?*" he asked

Nay that I do not know myself she answered Farewell for the present, if you like

And with these words she was gone

Francis returned to his lodging in a state of considerable commotion of mind He made the most trifling progress with his Euclid for that forenoon and was more often at the window than at his improvised writing-table But beyond seeing the return of Miss Vandeleur and the meeting between her and her father who was smoking a Trichinopoly cigar in the verandah there was nothing notable in the neighbourhood of the house with the green blinds before the time of the mid-day meal The young man hastily allayed his appetite in a neighbouring restaurant and returned with the speed of unallayed curiosity to the house in the Rue Lepic A mounted servant was leading a saddle horse to and fro before the garden wall and the porter of Francis's lodging was smoking a pipe against the doorpost, absorbed in contemplation of the livery and the steeds

Look! he cried to the young man "what fine cattle! what an elegant costume! They belong to the brother of M de Vandeleur who is now within upon a visit He is a great man a general in your country, and you doubtless know him well by reputation

I confess returned Francis, 'that I have never heard of General Vandeleur before We have many officers of that grade and my pursuits have been exclusively civil

It is he" replied the porter "who lost the great diamond of the Indies Of that at least you must have read often in the papers

As soon as Francis could disengage himself from the porter he ran upstairs and hurried to the window Immediately below the clear space in the chestnut leaves the two gentlemen were seated in conversation over a cigar The General, a red military looking man, offered some traces of a family resemblance to his brother he had something of the same features something although very little of the same free and powerful carriage but he was older smaller and more common in air his likeness was that of a caricature and he seemed altogether a poor and debile being by the side of the Dictator They spoke in tones so low leaning over the table with every appearance of interest that Francis could catch no more than a word or two on an occasion For as little as he heard he was convinced that the conversation turned upon himself and his own career several times the name of Scrymgeour reached his ear for it was easy to distinguish, and still more frequently he fancied he could distinguish the name Francis

At length the General, as if in a hot anger broke forth into several violent exclamations

Francis Vandeleur' he cried accentuating the last word 'Francis Vandeleur I tell you

The Dictator made a movement of his whole body half affirmative half contemptuous but his answer was inaudible to the young man

Was he the Francis Vandeleur in question? he wondered Were they discussing the name under which he was to be married? Or was the whole affair a dream and a delusion of his own conceit and self absorption?

After another interval of inaudible talk, dissension seemed again to rise between the couple underneath the chestnut, and again the General raised his voice angrily so as to be audible to Francis

'My wife?' he cried I have done with my wife for good I will not hear her name I am sick of her very name

And he swore aloud and beat the table with his fist

The Dictator appeared by his gesture to pacify him after a paternal fashion and a little after he conducted him to the garden-gate The pair shook hands affectionately enough but as soon as the door had closed behind his visitor, John Vandeleur fell into a fit of laughter which sounded unkindly and even devilish in the ears of Francis Scrymgeour

So another day had passed and little more learnt But the young man remembered that the morrow was Tuesday and promised himself some curious discoveries, all might be well or all might be ill he was sure at least to glean some curious information and perhaps by good luck get at the heart of the mystery which surrounded his father and his family

As the hour of the dinner drew near many preparations were made in the garden of the house with the green blinds That table which was partly visible to Francis through the chestnut leaves was destined to serve as a sideboard and carried relays of plates and the materials for salad the other which was almost entirely concealed had been set apart for the diners, and Francis could catch glimpes of white cloth and silver plate

Mr Rolles arrived punctual to the minute he looked like a man upon his guard and spoke low and sparingly The Dictator on the other hand appeared to enjoy an unusual flow of spirits his laugh which was youthful and pleasant to hear sounded frequently from the garden by the modulation and the changes of his voice it was obvious that he told many droll stories and imitated the accents of a variety of different nations and before he and the young clergyman had finished their vermouth all feeling of disgust was at an end, and they were talking together like a pair of school companions

At length Miss Vandeleur made her appearance carrying the soup-tureen, Mr Rolles ran to offer her assistance which she laughingly refused and there was an interchange of pleasantries among the trio which seemed to have reference to this primitive manner of waiting by one of the company

'One is more at one's ease' Mr Vandeleur was heard to declare

Next moment they were all three in their places and Francis could see as little as he could hear of what passed But the dinner seemed to go merrily, there was a perpetual babble of voices and sound of knives and forks below

the chestnut and Francis who had no more than a roll to gnaw was affected with envy by the comfort and deliberation of the meal. The party lingered over one dish after another and then over a delicate dessert with a bottle of old wine carefully uncorked by the hand of the Dictator himself. As it began to grow dark a lamp was set upon the table and a couple of candles on the sideboard for the night was perfectly pure, starry and windless. Light over flowed besides from the door and window in the verandah so that the garden was illuminated and the leaves twinkled in the darkness.

For perhaps the tenth time Miss Vandeleur entered the house and on this occasion she returned with the coffee tray which she placed upon the side board. At the same moment her father rose from his seat.

The coffee is my province Francis heard him say.

And next moment he saw his supposed father standing by the sideboard in the light of the candles.

Talking over his shoulder all the while Mr Vandeleur poured out two cups of the brown stimulant and then by a rapid act of prestidigitation emptied the contents of a tiny phial into the smaller of the two. The thing was so swiftly done that even Francis who looked straight into his face had hardly time to perceive the movement before it was completed. And next instant and still laughing Mr Vandeleur had turned again towards the table with a cup in either hand.

'Ere we have done with this said he we may expect our famous Hebrew.'

It would be impossible to depict the confusion and distress of Francis Scrymgeour. He saw foul play going forward before his eyes and he felt bound to interfere but knew not how. It might be a mere pleasantry and then how should he look if he were to offer an unnecessary warning? Or again if it were serious the criminal might be his own father and then how should he not lament if he were to bring ruin on the author of his days? For the first time he became conscious of his own position as a spy. To wait inactive at such a juncture and with such a conflict of sentiments in his bosom was to suffer the most acute torture he clung to the bars of the shutters his heart beat fast and with irregularity and he felt a strong sweat break forth upon his body.

Several minutes passed.

He seemed to perceive the conversation die away and grow less and less in vivacity and volume but still no sign of any alarming or even notable event.

Suddenly the ring of a glass breaking was followed by a faint and dull sound, as of a person who should have fallen forward with his head upon the table. At the same moment a piercing scream arose from the garden.

What have you done? cried Miss Vandeleur. He is dead!

The Dictator replied in a violent whisper, so strong and sibilant that every word was audible to the watcher at the window.

'Silence!' said Mr Vandeleur the man is as well as I am. Take him by the heels whilst I carry him by the shoulders.'

Francis heard Miss Vandeleur break forth into a passion of tears.

Do you hear what I say? resumed the Dictator in the same tones 'Or do you wish to quarrel with me? I give you your choice, Miss Vandeleur.'

There was another pause and the Dictator spoke again

Take that man by the heels he said I must have him brought into the house If I were a little younger I could help myself against the world But now that years and dangers are upon me and my hands are weakened I must turn to you for aid

It is a crime replied the girl

I am your father said Mr Vandeleur

This appeal seemed to produce its effect A scuffling noise followed upon the gravel a chair was overset and then Francis saw the father and daughter stagger across the walk and disappear under the verandah bearing the inanimate body of Mr Rolles embraced about the knees and shoulders The young clergyman was limp and pallid and his head rolled upon his shoulders at every step

Was he alive or dead? Francis in spite of the Dictator's declaration inclined to the latter view A great crime had been committed a great calamity had fallen upon the inhabitants of the house with the green blinds To his surprise Francis found all horror for the deed swallowed up in sorrow for a girl and an old man whom he judged to be in the height of peril A tide of generous feeling swept into his heart he too would help his father against man and mankind against fate and justice and casting open the shutters he closed his eyes and threw himself with outstretched arms into the foliage of the chestnut

Branch after branch slipped from his grasp or broke under his weight then he caught a stalwart bough under his armpit and hung suspended for a second and then he let himself drop and fall heavily against the table A cry of alarm from the house warned him that his entrance had not been effected unobserved He recovered himself with a stagger and in three bounds crossed the intervening space and stood before the door in the verandah

In a small apartment carpeted with matting and surrounded by glazed cabinets full of rare and costly curios Mr Vandeleur was stooping over the body of Mr Rolles He raised himself as Francis entered and there was an instantaneous passage of words It was the business of a second as fast as an eye can wink the thing was done the young man had not the time to be sure but it seemed to him as if the Dictator had taken something from the curate's breast looked at it for the least fraction of time as it lay in his hand and then suddenly and swiftly passed it to his daughter

All this was over while Francis had still one foot upon the threshold and the other raised in air The next instant he was on his knees to Mr Vandeleur

'Father' he cried Let me too help you I will do what you wish and ask no questions I will obey you with my life treat me as a son and you will find I have a son's devotion

A deplorable explosion of oaths was the Dictator's first reply

'Son and father?' he cried 'Father and son? What d---d unnatural comedy is all this? How do you come in my garden? What do you want? And who, in God's name are you?'

Francis with a stunned and shamefaced aspect got upon his feet again, and stood in silence

Then a light seemed to break upon Mr Vandeleur and he laughed aloud

I see cried he It is Scrymgeour Very well Mr Scrymgeour Let me tell you in a few words how you stand You have entered my private residence by force or perhaps by fraud but certainly with no encouragement from me, and you come at a moment of some annoyance a guest having fainted at my table to besiege me with your protestations You are no son of mine You are my brother's bastard by a fishwife if you want to know I regard you with an indifference closely bordering on aversion and from what I now see of your conduct I judge your mind to be exactly suitable to your exterior I recommend you these mortifying reflections for your leisure and in the meantime let me beseech you to rid us of your presence If I were not occupied added the Dictator with a terrifying oath 'I should give you the unholiest drubbing ere you went'

Francis listened in profound humiliation He would have fled had it been possible but as he had no means of leaving the residence into which he had so unfortunately penetrated he could do no more than stand foolishly where he was

It was Miss Vandeleur who broke the silence

Father she said you speak in anger Mr Scrymgeour may have been mistaken but he meant well and kindly

Thank you for speaking returned the Dictator 'You remind me of some other observations which I hold it a point of honour to make to Mr Scrymgeour My brother ' he continued addressing the young man has been foolish enough to give you an allowance, he was foolish enough and presumptuous enough to propose a match between you and this young lady You were exhibited to her two nights ago and I rejoice to tell you that she rejected the idea with disgust Let me add that I have considerable influence with your father and it shall not be my fault if you are not beggared of your allowance and sent back to your scrivening ere the week be out

The tones of the old man's voice were if possible more wounding than his language Francis felt himself exposed to the most cruel blighting and unbearable contempt his head turned and he covered his face with his hands uttering at the same time a tearless sob of agony But Miss Vandeleur once again interfered in his behalf

Mr Scrymgeour, she said speaking in clear and even tones 'you must not be concerned at my father's harsh expressions I felt no disgust for you on the contrary I asked an opportunity to make your better acquaintance As for what has passed to night believe me it has filled my mind with both pity and esteem'

Just then Mr Rolles made a convulsive movement with his arm which convinced Francis that he was only drugged and was beginning to throw off the influence of the opiate Mr Vandeleur stooped over him and examined his face for an instant.

'Come, come!' cried he raising his head Let there be an end to this And since you are so pleased with his conduct Miss Vandeleur take a candle and show the bastard out

The young lady hastened to obey

‘Thank you’ said Francis as soon as he was alone with her in the garden
 ‘I thank you from my soul This has been the bitterest evening of my life but
 it will have always one pleasant recollection

I spoke as I felt she replied, and in justice to you It made my heart
 sorry that you should be so unkindly used

By this time they had reached the garden gate and Miss Vandeleur having
 set the candle on the ground was already unfastening the bolts

One word more said Francis This is not for the last time—I shall see you
 again, shall I not?

Alas! she answered ‘You have heard my father What can I do but obey?’

‘Tell me at least that it is not with your consent returned Francis tell
 me that you have no wish to see the last of me

Indeed replied she I have none You seem to me both brave and honest’

Then said Francis, give me a keepsake

She paused for a moment with her hand upon the key for the various bars
 and bolts were all undone and there was nothing left but to open the lock

If I agree she said, will you promise to do as I tell you from point to
 point?

‘Can you ask?’ replied Francis I would do so willingly on your bare word’

She turned the key and threw open the door

‘Be it so said she You do not know what you ask but be it so Whatever
 you hear she continued whatever happens do not return to this house
 hurry fast until you reach the lighted and populous quarters of the city even
 there be upon your guard You are in a greater danger than you fancy Promise
 me you will not so much as look at my keepsake until you are in a place of
 safety

I promise replied Francis

She put something loosely wrapped in a handkerchief into the young man’s
 hand and at the same time with more strength than he could have anticipated
 she pushed him into the street

Now run! she cried

He heard the door close behind him and the noise of the bolts being replaced

My faith said he since I have promised!

And he took to his heels down the lane that leads into the Rue Ravignan
 He was not fifty paces from the house with the green blinds when the most
 diabolical outcry suddenly arose out of the stillness of the night Mechanically
 he stood still another passenger followed his example in the neighbouring
 floors he saw people crowding to the windows a conflagration could not have
 produced more disturbance in this empty quarter And yet it seemed to be all
 the work of a single man roaring between grief and rage like a lioness robbed
 of her whelps and Francis was surprised and alarmed to hear his own name
 shouted with English imprecations to the wind

His first movement was to return to the house his second as he remembered
 Miss Vandeleur’s advice to continue his flight with greater expedition
 than before and he was in the act of turning to put his thoughts in action
 when the Dictator bareheaded bawling aloud his white hair blowing about his

head shot past him like a ball out of the cannon's mouth and went careering down the street

That was a close shave' thought Francis to himself. What he wants with me and why he should be so disturbed I cannot think, but he is plainly not good company for the moment and I cannot do better than follow Miss Vandeleur's advice

So saying he turned to retrace his steps thinking to double and descend by the Rue Lepic itself while his pursuer should continue to follow after him on the other line of street. The plan was ill devised as a matter of fact he should have taken his seat in the nearest cafe and waited there until the first heat of the pursuit was over. But besides that Francis had no experience and little natural aptitude for the small war of private life he was so unconscious of any evil on his part that he saw nothing to fear beyond a disagreeable interview. And to disagreeable interviews he felt he had already served his apprenticeship that evening nor could he suppose that Miss Vandeleur had left anything unsaid. Indeed the young man was sore both in body and mind—the one was all bruised the other was full of smarting arrows, and he owned to himself that Mr Vandeleur was master of a very deadly tongue.

The thought of his bruises reminded him that he had not only come without a hat but that his clothes had considerably suffered in his descent through the chestnut. At the first magazine he purchased a cheap wide awake and had the disorder of his toilet summarily repaired. The keepsake still rolled in the handkerchief he thrust in the meanwhile into his trousers pocket.

Not many steps beyond the shop he was conscious of a sudden shock a hand upon his throat an infuriated face close to his own and an open mouth bawling curses in his ear. The Dictator having found no trace of his quarry was returning by the other way. Francis was a stalwart young fellow but he was no match for his adversary whether in strength or skill, and after a few ineffectual struggles he resigned himself entirely to his captor.

What do you want with me? said he

We will talk of that at home' returned the Dictator grimly

And he continued to march the young man up hill in the direction of the house with the green blinds.

But Francis although he no longer struggled was only waiting an opportunity to make a bold push for freedom. With a sudden jerk he left the collar of his coat in the hands of Mr Vandeleur and once more made off at his best speed in the direction of the Boulevards.

The tables were now turned. If the Dictator was the stronger Francis in the top of his youth was the more fleet of foot and he had soon effected his escape among the crowds. Relieved for a moment but with a growing sentiment of alarm and wonder in his mind he walked briskly until he debouched upon the Place de l'Opera lit up like day with electric lamps.

This at last, ' thought he should satisfy Miss Vandeleur.

And turning to his right along the Boulevards he entered the Cafe Amerique and ordered some beer. It was both late and early for the majority of the frequenters of the establishment. Only two or three persons all men were

dotted here and there at separate tables in the hall and Francis was too much occupied by his own thoughts to observe their presence

He drew the handkerchief from his pocket The object wrapped in it proved to be a morocco case clasped and ornamented in gilt which opened by means of a spring and disclosed to the horrified young man a diamond of monstrous bigness and extraordinary brilliancy The circumstance was so inexplicable the value of the stone was plainly so enormous that Francis sat staring into the open casket without movement without conscious thought like a man stricken suddenly with idiocy

A hand was laid upon his shoulder lightly but firmly and a quiet voice which yet had in it the ring of command uttered these words in his ear—

Close the casket and compose your face

Looking up he beheld a man still young of an urbane and tranquil presence and dressed with rich simplicity This personage had risen from a neighbouring table and bringing his glass with him had taken a seat beside Francis

Close the casket repeated the stranger and put it quietly back into your pocket where I feel persuaded it should never have been Try if you please to throw off your bewildered air and act as though I were one of your acquaintances whom you had met by chance So' Touch glasses with me This is better I fear, sir you must be an amateur

And the stranger pronounced these last words with a smile of peculiar meaning leaned back in his seat and enjoyed a deep inhalation of tobacco

For God's sake said Francis tell me who you are and what this means? Why I should obey your most unusual suggestions I am sure I know not but the truth is I have fallen this evening into so many perplexing adventures and all I meet conduct themselves so strangely that I think I must either have gone mad or wandered into another planet Your face inspires me with confidence, you seem wise good and experienced tell me for heaven's sake, why you accost me in so odd a fashion?

'All in due time replied the stranger But I have the first hand and you must begin by telling me how the Rajah's Diamond is in your possession.'

The Rajah's Diamond! echoed Francis

I would not speak so loud if I were you returned the other 'But most certainly you have the Rajah's Diamond in your pocket I have seen and handled it a score of times in Sir Thomas Vandeleur's collection

Sir Thomas Vandeleur! The General! My father! cried Francis

'Your father?' repeated the stranger I was not aware the General had any family'

I am illegitimate sir replied Francis with a flush

The other bowed with gravity It was a respectful bow as of a man silently apologising to his equal and Francis felt relieved and comforted he scarce knew why The society of this person did him good he seemed to touch firm ground, a strong feeling of respect grew up in his bosom and mechanically he removed his wide-awake as though in the presence of a superior

I perceive said the stranger that your adventures have not all been peaceful Your collar is torn, your face is scratched you have a cut upon your

temple, you will perhaps pardon my curiosity when I ask you to explain how you came by these injuries and how you happen to have stolen property to an enormous value in your pocket

I must differ from you! returned Francis hotly I possess no stolen property And if you refer to the diamond, it was given to me not an hour ago by Miss Vandeleur in the Rue Lepic

By Miss Vandeleur of the Rue Lepic!" repeated the other You interest me more than you suppose Pray continue

Heavens! cried Francis

His memory had made a sudden bound He had seen Mr Vandeleur take an article from the breast of his drugged visitor and that article he was now persuaded was a morocco case

You have a light? inquired the stranger

Listen replied Francis I know not who you are but I believe you to be worthy of confidence and helpful I find myself in strange waters I must have counsel and support and since you invite me I shall tell you all

And he briefly recounted his experiences since the day when he was summoned from the bank by his lawyer

Yours is indeed a remarkable history said the stranger after the young man had made an end of his narrative and your position is full of difficulty and peril Many would counsel you to seek out your father and give the diamond to him but I have other views Waiter! he cried

The waiter drew near

Will you ask the manager to speak with me a moment? said he and Francis observed once more both in his tone and manner, the evidence of a habit of command

The waiter withdrew and returned in a moment with the manager, who bowed with obsequious respect

What said he can I do to serve you?

Have the goodness replied the stranger indicating Francis 'to tell this gentleman my name

You have the honour sir said the functionary addressing young Scrymgeour, to occupy the same table with His Highness Prince Florizel of Bohemia

Francis rose with precipitation, and made a grateful reverence to the Prince, who bade him resume his seat

I thank you said Florizel once more addressing the functionary, I am sorry to have deranged you for so small a matter

And he dismissed him with a movement of his hand

And now added the Prince turning to Francis give me the diamond Without a word the casket was handed over

You have done right said Florizel your sentiments have properly inspired you and you will live to be grateful for the misfortunes of to night A man Mr Scrymgeour may fall into a thousand perplexities but if his heart be upright and his intelligence unclouded he will issue from them all without dis honour Let your mind be at rest your affairs are in my hand, and with the

aid of heaven I am strong enough to bring them to a good end Follow me, if you please to my carriage

So saying the Prince arose and having left a piece of gold for the waiter, conducted the young man from the cafe and along the Boulevard to where an unpretentious brougham and a couple of servants out of livery awaited his arrival

This carriage said he is at your disposal collect your baggage as rapidly as you can make it convenient and my servants will conduct you to a villa in the neighbourhood of Paris where you can wait in some degree of comfort until I have had time to arrange your situation You will find there a pleasant garden, a library of good authors a cook a cellar and some good cigars which I recommend to your attention Jerome he added turning to one of the servants 'you have heard what I say, I leave Mr Scrymgeour in your charge, you will I know be careful of my friend

Francis uttered some broken phrases of gratitude

It will be time enough to thank me said the Prince, when you are acknowledged by your father and married to Miss Vandeleur'

And with that the Prince turned away and strolled leisurely in the direction of Montmartre He hailed the first passing cab gave an address and a quarter of an hour afterwards having discharged the driver some distance lower he was knocking at Mr Vandeleur's garden gate

It was opened with singular precautions by the Dictator in person

Who are you? he demanded

You must pardon me this late visit Mr Vandeleur replied the Prince

Your Highness is always welcome returned Mr Vandeleur stepping back The Prince profited by the open space and without waiting for his host walked right into the house and opened the door of the *salon* Two people were seated there one was Miss Vandeleur who bore the marks of weeping about her eyes and was still shaken from time to time by a sob, in the other the Prince recognised the young man who had consulted him on literary matters about a month before in a club smoking room

Good evening Miss Vandeleur said Florizel you look fatigued. Mr Rolles I believe I hope you have profited by the study of Gaboriau Mr Rolles"

But the young clergyman's temper was too much embittered for speech, and he contented himself with bowing stiffly and continued to gnaw his lip

To what good wind said Mr Vandeleur following his guest am I to attribute the honour of your Highness's presence?

I am come on business returned the Prince on business with you as soon as that is settled I shall request Mr Rolles to accompany me for a walk Mr Rolles he added with severity, let me remind you that I have not yet sat down

The clergyman sprang to his feet with an apology whereupon the Prince took an armchair beside the table handed his hat to Mr Vandeleur his cane to Mr Rolles and, leaving them standing and thus mentally employed upon his service, spoke as follows —

I have come here as I said upon business but had I come looking for pleasure I could not have been more displeased with my reception nor more dissatisfied with my company You sir addressing Mr Rolles you have treated your superior in station with courtesy, you Vandeleur receive me with a smile, but you know right well that your hands are not yet cleansed from misconduct I do not desire to be interrupted sir he added imperiously

I am here to speak, and not to listen and I have to ask you to hear me with respect and to obey punctiliously At the earliest possible date your daughter shall be married at the Embassy to my friend Francis Scrymgeour your brother's acknowledged son You will oblige me by offering not less than ten thousand pounds dowry For yourself, I will indicate to you in writing a mission of some importance in Siam which I destine to your care And now sir you will answer me in two words whether or not you agree to these conditions

'Your Highness will pardon me" said Mr Vandeleur, and permit me with all respect, to submit to him two queries'

The permission is granted replied the Prince

Your Highness resumed the Dictator has called Mr Scrymgeour his friend Believe me, had I known he was thus honoured, I should have treated him with proportional respect

You interrogate adroitly, said the Prince, but it will not serve your turn You have my commands, if I had never seen that gentleman before to night it would not render them less absolute

Your Highness interprets my meaning with his usual subtlety returned Vandeleur Once more I have unfortunately put the police upon the track of Mr Scrymgeour on a charge of theft am I to withdraw or to uphold the accusation'

You will please yourself" replied Florizel 'The question is one between your conscience and the laws of this land Give me my hat and you Mr Rolles, give me my cane and follow me Miss Vandeleur I wish you good evening I judge, he added to Vandeleur, that your silence means unqualified assent'

If I can do no better" replied the old man I shall submit but I warn you openly it shall not be without a struggle

You are old said the Prince but years are disgraceful to the wicked Your age is more unwise than the youth of others Do not provoke me or you may find me harder than you dream This is the first time that I have fallen across your path in anger, take care that it be the last

With these words motioning the clergyman to follow Florizel left the apartment and directed his steps towards the garden gate and the Dictator following with a candle gave them light and once more undid the elaborate fastenings with which he sought to protect himself from intrusion

Your daughter is no longer present said the Prince, turning on the threshold Let me tell you that I understand your threats and you have only to lift your hand to bring upon yourself sudden and irremediable ruin

The Dictator made no reply but as the Prince turned his back upon him

in the lamplight he made a gesture full of menace and insane fury and the next moment slipping round a corner he was running at full speed for the nearest cab stand

(*Here, says my Arabian the thread of events is finally diverted from THE HOUSE WITH THE GREEN BLINDS One more adventure, he adds and we have done with THE RAJAH'S DIAMOND That last link in the chain is known among the inhabitants of Bagdad by the name of THE ADVENTURE OF PRINCE FLORIZEL AND A DETECTIVE*)

THE ADVENTURE OF PRINCE FLORIZEL AND A DETECTIVE

PRINCE FLORIZEL walked with Mr Rolles to the door of a small hotel where the latter resided They spoke much together and the clergyman was more than once affected to tears by the mingled severity and tenderness of Florizel's reproaches

I have made ruin of my life he said at last Help me tell me what I am to do I have alas' neither the virtues of a priest nor the dexterity of a rogue

Now that you are humbled said the Prince I command no longer the repentant have to do with God and not with princes But if you will let me advise you go to Australia as a colonist seek menial labour in the open air and try to forget that you have ever been a clergyman or that you ever set eyes on that accursed stone

Accurst indeed! replied Mr Rolles Where is it now? What further hurt is it not working for mankind?

It will do no more evil returned the Prince It is here in my pocket And this he added kindly will show that I place some faith in your penitence young as it is

Suffer me to touch your hand pleaded Mr Rolles

No, replied Prince Florizel not yet

The tone in which he uttered these last words was eloquent in the ears of the young clergyman and for some minutes after the Prince had turned away he stood on the threshold following with his eyes the retreating figure and invoking the blessing of heaven upon a man so excellent in counsel.

For several hours the Prince walked alone in unfrequented streets His mind was full of concern what to do with the diamond whether to return it to its owner whom he judged unworthy of this rare possession or to take some sweeping and courageous measure and put it out of the reach of all mankind at once and for ever was a problem too grave to be decided in a moment The manner in which it had come into his hands appeared manifestly providential and as he took out the jewel and looked at it under the street lamps its size and surprising brilliancy inclined him more and more to think of it as of an unmixed and dangerous evil for the world

God help me! he thought if I look at it much oftener I shall begin to grow covetous myself

At last though still uncertain in his mind he turned his steps towards the

small but elegant mansion on the riverside which had belonged for centuries to his royal family The arms of Bohemia are deeply graved over the door and upon the tall chimneys passengers have a look into a green court set with the most costly flowers and a stork the only one in Paris perches on the gable all day long and keeps a crowd before the house Grave servants are seen passing to and fro within and from time to time the great gate is thrown open and a carriage rolls below the arch For many reasons this residence was especially dear to the heart of Prince Florizel he never drew near to it without enjoying that sentiment of home coming so rare in the lives of the great and on the present evening he beheld its tall roof and mildly illuminated windows with unfeigned relief and satisfaction

As he was approaching the postern door by which he always entered when alone a man stepped forth from the shadow and presented himself with an obeisance in the Prince's path

I have the honour of addressing Prince Florizel of Bohemia said he Such is my title replied the Prince What do you want with me?

I am said the man a detective and I have to present your Highness with this billet from the Prefect of Police

The Prince took the letter and glanced it through by the light of the street lamp It was highly apologetic, but requested him to follow the bearer to the Prefecture without delay

In short said Florizel, I am arrested

Your Highness replied the officer nothing I am certain could be further from the intention of the Prefect You will observe that he has not granted a warrant It is mere formality or call it if you prefer an obligation that your Highness lays on the authorities

At the same time, asked the Prince if I were to refuse to follow you?

I will not conceal from your Highness that a considerable discretion has been granted me replied the detective with a bow

Upon my word cried Florizel your effrontery astounds me! Yourself as an agent I must pardon but your superiors shall dearly smart for their misconduct What have you any idea is the cause of this impolitic and unconstitutional act? You will observe that I have as yet neither refused nor consented and much may depend on your prompt and ingenuous answer Let me remind you officer that this is an affair of some gravity

Your Highness said the detective humbly General Vandeleur and his brother have had the incredible presumption to accuse you of theft The famous diamond they declare is in your hands A word from you in denial will most amply satisfy the Prefect nay I go farther if your Highness would so far honour a subaltern as to declare his ignorance of the matter even to myself I should ask permission to retire upon the spot

Florizel, up to the last moment had regarded his adventure in the light of a trifle only serious upon international considerations At the name of Vandeleur the horrible truth broke upon him in a moment he was not only arrested but he was guilty This was not only an annoying incident—it was a peril to his honour What was he to say? What was he to do? The Rajah's Diamond

was indeed an accursed stone and it seemed as if he were to be the last victim to its influence

One thing was certain He could not give the required assurance to the detective He must gain time

His hesitation had not lasted a second

Be it so said he let us walk together to the Prefecture

The man once more bowed and proceeded to follow Florizel at a respectful distance in the rear

Approach said the Prince I am in a humour to talk and if I mistake not now I look at you again this is not the first time that we have met

I count it an honour replied the officer that your Highness should recollect my face It is eight years since I had the pleasure of an interview

To remember faces' returned Florizel is as much a part of my profession as it is of yours Indeed rightly looked upon a Prince and a detective serve in the same corps We are both combatants against crime only mine is the more lucrative and yours the more dangerous rank, and there is a sense in which both may be made equally honourable to a good man I had rather strange as you may think it be a detective of character and parts than a weak and ignoble sovereign

The officer was overwhelmed

Your Highness returns good for evil,' said he To an act of presumption he replies by the most amiable condescension

'How do you know replied Florizel that I am not seeking to corrupt you'

Heaven preserve me from the temptation' cried the detective

'I applaud your answer returned the Prince It is that of a wise and honest man The world is a great place and stocked with wealth and beauty, and there is no limit to the rewards that may be offered Such an one who would refuse a million of money may sell his honour for an empire or the love of a woman and I myself who speak to you have seen occasions so tempting provocations so irresistible to the strength of human virtue that I have been glad to tread in your steps and recommend myself to the grace of God It is thus, thanks to that modest and becoming habit alone he added that you and I can walk this town together with untarnished hearts

I had always heard that you were brave replied the officer but I was not aware that you were wise and pious You speak the truth and you speak it with an accent that moves me to the heart This world is indeed a place of trial

We are now said Florizel in the middle of the bridge Lean your elbows on the parapet and look over As the water rushing below so the passions and complications of life carry away the honesty of weak men Let me tell you a story

I receive your Highness's commands" replied the man

And imitating the Prince he leaned against the parapet and disposed himself to listen The city was already sunk in slumber had it not been for the

infinity of lights and the outline of buildings on the starry sky they might have been alone beside some country river

An officer' began Prince Florizel a man of courage and conduct who had already risen by merit to an eminent rank and won not only admiration but respect visited in an unfortunate hour for his peace of mind the collections of an Indian Prince Here he beheld a diamond so extraordinary for size and beauty that from that instant he had only one desire in life honour reputation, friendship the love of country he was ready to sacrifice all for this lump of sparkling crystal For three years he served this semi barbarian potentate as Jacob served Laban, he falsified frontiers he connived at murders he unjustly condemned and executed a brother officer who had the misfortune to displease the Rajah by some honest freedoms lastly at a time of great danger to his native land he betrayed a body of his fellow soldiers and suffered them to be defeated and massacred by thousands In the end he had amassed a magnificent fortune and brought home with him the coveted diamond

Years passed' continued the Prince 'and at length the diamond is accidentally lost It falls into the hands of a simple and laborious youth a student, a minister of God just entering on a career of usefulness and even distinction Upon him also the spell is cast, he deserts everything his holy calling his studies and flees with the gem into a foreign country The officer has a brother an astute daring unscrupulous man who learns the clergymans secret What does he do? Tell his brother inform the police? No upon this man also the Satanic charm has fallen he must have the stone for him self At the risk of murder he drugs the young priest and seizes the prey And now, by an accident which is not important to my moral the jewel passes out of his custody into that of another who terrified at what he sees, gives it into the keeping of a man in high station and above reproach

The officer's name is Thomas Vandeleur, continued Florizel The stone is called the Rajah's Diamond And —suddenly opening his hand— you behold it here before your eyes

The officer started back with a cry

We have spoken of corruption said the Prince 'To me this nugget of bright crystal is as loathsome as though it were crawling with the worms of death it is as shocking as though it were compacted out of innocent blood. I see it here in my hand and I know it is shining with hell fire I have told you but a hundredth part of its story, what passed in former ages to what crimes and treacheries it incited men of yore the imagination trembles to conceive, for years and years it has faithfully served the powers of hell enough, I say of blood enough of disgrace, enough of broken lives and friendships all things come to an end the evil like the good, pestilence as well as beautiful music, and as for this diamond God forgive me if I do wrong but its empire ends to night.

The Prince made a sudden movement with his hand and the jewel, describing an arc of light, dived with a splash into the flowing river

Amen,' said Florizel with gravity I have slain a cockatrice!

God pardon me' cried the detective 'What have you done? I am a ruined man'

I think ' returned the Prince with a smile that many well-to do people in this city might envy you your ruin

Alas' your Highness' said the officer and you corrupt me after all?

It seems there was no help for it replied Florizel And now let us go forward to the Prefecture

Not long after the marriage of Francis Scrymgeour and Miss Vandeleur was celebrated in great privacy and the Prince acted on that occasion as groom's man The two Vandeleurs surprised some rumour of what had happened to the diamond and their vast diving operations on the River Seine are the wonder and amusement of the idle It is true that through some miscalculation they have chosen the wrong branch of the river As for the Prince that sublime person having now served his turn may go along with the *Arabian Author* topsy-turvy into space But if the reader insists on more specific information, I am happy to say that a recent revolution hurled him from the throne of Bohemia in consequence of his continued absence and edifying neglect of public business, and that his Highness now keeps a cigar store in Rupert Street much frequented by other foreign refugees I go there from time to time to smoke and have a chat and find him as great a creature as in the days of his prosperity, he has an Olympian air behind the counter and although a sedentary life is beginning to tell upon his waistcoat he is probably, take him for all in all the handsomest tobacconist in London.

THE PAVILION ON THE LINKS

I

TELLS How I CAMPED IN GRADEN SEA WOOD AND BEHELD A LIGHT
IN THE PAVILION

I WAS a great solitary when I was young I made it my pride to keep aloof and suffice for my own entertainment, and I may say that I had neither friends nor acquaintances until I met that friend who became my wife and the mother of my children With one man only was I on private terms this was R Northmour Esquire of Graden Easter in Scotland We had met at college and though there was not much liking between us nor even much intimacy, we were so nearly of a humour that we could associate with ease to both *Misanthropes* we believed ourselves to be, but I have thought since that we were only sulky fellows It was scarcely a companionship but a co-existence in unsociability Northmour's exceptional violence of temper made it no easy affair for him to keep the peace with any one but me and as he respected my silent ways and let me come and go as I pleased I could tolerate his presence without concern I think we called each other friends.

When Northmour took his degree and I decided to leave the university without one he invited me on a long visit to Graden Easter and it was thus that I first became acquainted with the scene of my adventure. The mansion house of Graden stood in a bleak stretch of country some three miles from the shore of the German Ocean. It was as large as a barrack and as it had been built of a soft stone liable to consume in the eager air of the seaside it was damp and draughty within and half ruinous without. It was impossible for two young men to lodge with comfort in such a dwelling. But there stood in the northern part of the estate in a wilderness of links and blowing sand hills, and between a plantation and the sea a small Pavilion or Belvidere of modern design which was exactly suited to our wants and in this hermitage speaking little reading much and rarely associating except at meals Northmour and I spent four tempestuous winter months. I might have stayed longer but one March night there sprang up between us a dispute which rendered my departure necessary. Northmour spoke hotly I remember and I suppose I must have made some tart rejoinder. He leaped from his chair and grappled me. I had to fight, without exaggeration for my life, and it was only with a great effort that I mastered him for he was near as strong in body as myself and seemed filled with the devil. The next morning we met on our usual terms but I judged it more delicate to withdraw nor did he attempt to dissuade me.

It was nine years before I revisited the neighbourhood. I travelled at that time with a tilt cart a tent and a cooking stove tramping all day beside the waggon and at night, whenever it was possible gipsying in a cove of the hills or by the side of a wood I believe I visited in this manner most of the wild and desolate regions both in England and Scotland and as I had neither friends nor relations I was troubled with no correspondence and had nothing in the nature of headquarters unless it was the office of my solicitors from whom I drew my income twice a year. It was a life in which I delighted and I fully thought to have grown old upon the march and at last died in a ditch.

It was my whole business to find desolate corners where I could camp without the fear of interruption and hence being in another part of the same shire I bethought me suddenly of the Pavilion on the Links. No thorough fare passed within three miles of it. The nearest town and that was but a fisher village was at a distance of six or seven. For ten miles of length and from a depth varying from three miles to half a mile this belt of barren country lay along the sea. The beach which was the natural approach was full of quicksands. Indeed I may say there is hardly a better place of concealment in the United Kingdom. I determined to pass a week in the Sea Wood of Graden Easter and making a long stage reached it about sundown on a wild September day.

The country I have said was mixed sand hill and links *links* being a Scottish name for sand which has ceased drifting and become more or less solidly covered with turf. The Pavilion stood on an even space a little behind it the wood began in a hedge of elders huddled together by the wind in front a few tumbled sand hills stood between it and the sea. An outcropping of rock had formed a bastion for the sand so that there was here a promontory in the

coast line between two shallow bays and just beyond the tides the rock again cropped out and formed an islet of small dimensions but strikingly designed The quicksands were of great extent at low water and had an infamous reputation in the country Close in shore between the isle and the promontory it was said they would swallow a man in four minutes and a half, but there may have been little ground for this precision The district was alive with rabbits and haunted by gulls which made a continual piping about the pavilion On summer days the outlook was bright and even gladsome but at sundown in September with a high wind and a heavy surf rolling in close along the links the place told of nothing but dead mariners and sea disaster A ship beating to windward on the horizon and a huge truncheon of wreck half buried in the sands at my feet completed the innuendo of the scene

The pavilion—it had been built by the last proprietor Northmours uncle a silly and prodigal virtuoso—presented little signs of age It was two storeys in height Italian in design surrounded by a patch of garden in which nothing had prospered but a few coarse flowers and looked with its shuttered windows not like a house that had been deserted but like one that had never been tenanted by man Northmour was plainly from home whether as usual sulking in the cabin of his yacht or in one of his fitful and extravagant appearances in the world of society I had of course no means of guessing The place had an air of solitude that daunted even a solitary like myself the wind cried in the chimneys with a strange and wailing note and it was with a sense of escape as if I were going indoors that I turned away and driving my cart before me entered the skirts of the wood

The Sea Wood of Graden had been planted to shelter the cultivated fields behind and check the encroachments of the blowing sand As you advanced into it from coastward elders were succeeded by other hardy shrubs but the timber was all stunted and bushy it led a life of conflict the trees were accustomed to swing there all night long in fierce winter tempests and even in early spring the leaves were already flying and autumn was beginning in this exposed plantation Inland the ground rose into a little hill which along with the isle served as a sailing mark for seamen When the hill was open of the islet to the north vessels must bear well to the eastward to clear Graden Ness and the Graden Bullers In the lower ground a streamlet ran among the trees and being damned with dead leaves and clay of its own carrying spread out every here and there and lay in stagnant pools One or two ruined cottages were dotted about the wood and according to Northmour these were ecclesiastical foundations and in their time had sheltered pious hermits

I found a den or small hollow where there was a spring of pure water, and there clearing away the brambles I pitched the tent, and made a fire to cook my supper My horse I picketed farther in the wood where there was a patch of sward The banks of the den not only concealed the light of my fire but sheltered me from the wind which was cold as well as high

The life I was leading made me both hardy and frugal I never drank but water and rarely ate anything more costly than oatmeal and I required so little sleep that although I rose with the peep of day I would often lie long

awake in the dark or starry watches of the night Thus in Graden Sea Wood, although I fell thankfully asleep by eight in the evening I was awake again before eleven with a full possession of my faculties and no sense of drowsiness or fatigue I rose and sat by the fire watching the trees and clouds tumultuously tossing and fleeing overhead and hearkening to the wind and the rollers along the shore, till at length growing weary of inaction I quitted the den and strolled towards the borders of the wood A young moon buried in mist, gave a faint illumination to my steps and the light grew brighter as I walked forth into the links At the same moment the wind smelling salt of the open ocean and carrying particles of sand, struck me with its full force, so that I had to bow my head

When I raised it again to look about me I was aware of a light in the pavilion It was not stationary but passed from one window to another, as though some one were reviewing the different apartments with a lamp or candle I watched it for some seconds in great surprise When I had arrived in the afternoon the house had been plainly deserted now it was as plainly occupied It was my first idea that a gang of thieves might have broken in and be now ransacking Northmour's cupboards which were many and not ill supplied But what should bring thieves to Graden Easter? And again, all the shutters had been thrown open and it would have been more in the character of such gentry to close them I dismissed the notion, and fell back upon another Northmour himself must have arrived and was now airing and inspecting the pavilion

I have said that there was no real affection between this man and me but, had I loved him like a brother I was then so much more in love with solitude that I should none the less have shunned his company As it was I turned and ran for it and it was with genuine satisfaction that I found myself safely back beside the fire I had escaped an acquaintance, I should have one more night in comfort In the morning I might either slip away before Northmour was abroad or pay him as short a visit as I chose

But when morning came I thought the situation so diverting that I forgot my shyness Northmour was at my mercy I arranged a good practical jest, though I knew well that my neighbour was not the man to jest with in security and chuckling beforehand over its success took my place among the elders at the edge of the wood, whence I could command the door of the pavilion The shutters were all once more closed which I remember thinking odd and the house with its white walls and green venetians looked spruce and habitable in the morning light Hour after hour passed and still no sign of Northmour I knew him for a sluggard in the morning, but, as it drew on towards noon I lost my patience To say the truth I had promised myself to break my fast in the pavilion, and hunger began to prick me sharply It was a pity to let the opportunity go by without some cause for mirth but the grosser appetite prevailed and I relinquished my jest with regret and sallied from the wood

The appearance of the house affected me as I drew near with disquietude It seemed unchanged since last evening, and I had expected it I scarce knew why to wear some external signs of habitation But no the windows were

all closely shuttered the chimneys breathed no smoke, and the front door itself was closely padlocked Northmour therefore had entered by the back this was the natural and indeed the necessary conclusion and you may judge of my surprise when on turning the house I found the back door similarly secured

My mind at once reverted to the original theory of thieves and I blamed myself sharply for my last night's inaction I examined all the windows on the lower storey but none of them had been tampered with, I tried the padlocks but they were both secure It thus became a problem how the thieves if thieves they were had managed to enter the house They must have got I reasoned upon the roof of the outhouse where Northmour used to keep his photographic battery and from thence either by the window of the study or that of my old bedroom completed their burglarious entry

I followed what I supposed was their example, and getting on the roof tried the shutters of each room Both were secure but I was not to be beaten and with a little force one of them flew open grazing as it did so the back of my hand I remember I put the wound to my mouth and stood for perhaps half a minute licking it like a dog and mechanically gazing behind me over the waste links and the sea, and in that space of time my eye made note of a large schooner yacht some miles to the north east Then I threw up the window and climbed in

I went over the house and nothing can express my mystification. There was no sign of disorder but on the contrary the rooms were unusually clean and pleasant I found fires laid ready for lighting three bedrooms prepared with a luxury quite foreign to Northmour's habits and with water in the ewers and the beds turned down a table set for three in the dining-room and an ample supply of cold meats game and vegetables on the pantry shelves There were guests expected that was plain but why guests when Northmour hated society? And above all why was the house thus stealthily prepared at dead of night? and why were the shutters closed and the doors padlocked?

I effaced all traces of my visit and came forth from the window feeling sobered and concerned

The schooner yacht was still in the same place and it flashed for a moment through my mind that this might be the *Red Earl* bringing the owner of the pavilion and his guests But the vessel's head was set the other way

II

TELLS OF THE NOCTURNAL LANDING FROM THE YACHT

I RETURNED to the den to cook myself a meal of which I stood in great need as well as to care for my horse whom I had somewhat neglected in the morning From time to time I went down to the edge of the wood but there was no change in the pavilion and not a human creature was seen all day upon

the links The schooner in the offing was the one touch of life within my range of vision She apparently with no set object stood off and on or lay to hour after hour but as the evening deepened she drew steadily nearer I became more convinced that she carried Northmour and his friends and that they would probably come ashore after dark not only because that was of a piece with the secrecy of the preparations but because the tide would not have flowed sufficiently before eleven to cover Graden Floe and the other sea quags that fortified the shore against invaders

All day the wind had been going down and the sea along with it, but there was a return towards sunset of the heavy weather of the day before The night set in pitch dark The wind came off the sea in squalls like a firing of a battery of cannon now and then there was a flaw of rain and the surf rolled heavier with the rising tide I was down at my observatory among the elders when a light was run up to the masthead of the schooner and showed she was closer in than when I had last seen her by the dying daylight I concluded that this must be a signal to Northmour's associates on shore and stepping forth into the links looked around me for something in response

A small footpath ran along the margin of the wood and formed the most direct communication between the pavilion and the mansion house and as I cast my eyes to that side I saw a spark of light not a quarter of a mile away and rapidly approaching From its uneven course it appeared to be the light of a lantern carried by a person who followed the windings of the path, and was often staggered and taken aback by the more violent squalls I concealed myself once more among the elders and waited eagerly for the newcomer's advance It proved to be a woman and as she passed within half a rod of my ambush I was able to recognise the features The deaf and silent old dame who had nursed Northmour in his childhood was his associate in this underhand affair

I followed her at a little distance taking advantage of the innumerable heights and hollows concealed by the darkness and favoured not only by the nurse's deafness but by the uproar of the wind and surf She entered the pavilion and going at once to the upper storey opened and set a light in one of the windows that looked towards the sea Immediately afterwards the light at the schooner's masthead was run down and extinguished Its purpose had been attained and those on board were sure that they were expected The old woman resumed her preparations although the other shutters remained closed I could see a glimmer going to and fro about the house, and a gush of sparks from one chimney after another soon told me that the fires were being kindled

Northmour and his guests I was now persuaded would come ashore as soon as there was water on the floe It was a wild night for boat service and I felt some alarm mingle with my curiosity as I reflected on the danger of the landing My old acquaintance it was true was the most eccentric of men but the present eccentricity was both disquieting and lugubrious to consider A variety of feelings thus led me towards the beach where I lay flat on my face in a hollow within six feet of the track that led to the pavilion Thence, I

should have the satisfaction of recognising the arrivals and if they should prove to be acquaintances greeting them as soon as they had landed

Some time before eleven while the tide was still dangerously low a boat's lantern appeared close in shore and my attention being thus awakened I could perceive another still far to seaward violently tossed and sometimes hidden by the billows The weather which was getting dirtier as the night went on and the perilous situation of the yacht upon a lee shore had probably driven them to attempt a landing at the earliest possible moment

A little afterwards four yachtsmen carrying a very heavy chest and guided by a fifth with a lantern passed close in front of me as I lay and were admitted to the pavilion by the nurse They returned to the beach and passed me a second time with another chest larger but apparently not so heavy as the first A third time they made the transit, and on this occasion one of the yachtsmen carried a leather portmanteau, and the others a lady's trunk and carriage bag My curiosity was sharply excited If a woman were among the guests of Northmour it would show a change in his habits and an apostasy from his pet theories of life well calculated to fill me with surprise When he and I dwelt there together the pavilion had been a temple of misogyny And now one of the detested sex was to be installed under its roof I remember one or two particulars a few notes of daintiness and almost of coquetry which had struck me the day before as I surveyed the preparations in the house their purpose was now clear and I thought myself dull not to have perceived it from the first

While I was thus reflecting a second lantern drew near me from the beach It was carried by a yachtsman whom I had not yet seen and who was conducting two other persons to the pavilion These two persons were unquestionably the guests for whom the house was made ready and straining eye and ear I set myself to watch them as they passed One was an unusually tall man, in a travelling hat slouched over his eyes and a highland cape closely buttoned and turned up so as to conceal his face You could make out no more of him than that he was as I have said unusually tall and walked feebly with a heavy stoop By his side and either clinging to him or giving him support—I could not make out which—was a young tall and slender figure of a woman She was extremely pale but in the light of the lantern her face was so marred by strong and changing shadows that she might equally well have been as ugly as sin or as beautiful as I afterwards found her to be

When they were just abreast of me the girl made some remark which was drowned by the noise of the wind

Hush! said her companion, and there was something in the tone with which the word was uttered that thrilled and rather shook my spirits It seemed to breathe from a bosom labouring under the deadliest terror I have never heard another syllable so expressive and I still hear it again when I am feverish at night and my mind runs upon old times The man turned towards the girl as he spoke I had a glimpse of much red beard and a nose which seemed to have been broken in youth and his light eyes seemed shining in his face with some strong and unpleasant emotion

But these two passed on and were admitted in their turn to the pavilion

One by one or in groups the seamen returned to the beach The wind brought me the sound of a rough voice crying Shove off! Then, after a pause another lantern drew near It was Northmour alone

My wife and I a man and a woman, have often agreed to wonder how a person could be at the same time so handsome and so repulsive as Northmour He had the appearance of a finished gentleman his face bore every mark of intelligence and courage but you had only to look at him even in his most amiable moment to see that he had the temper of a slaver captain I never knew a character that was both explosive and revengeful to the same degree he combined the vivacity of the south with the sustained and deadly hatreds of the north and both traits were plainly written on his face which was a sort of danger signal In person he was tall strong and active his hair and complexion very dark, his features handsomely designed but spoiled by a menacing expression

At that moment he was somewhat paler than by nature, he wore a heavy frown and his lips worked and he looked sharply round him as he walked, like a man besieged with apprehensions And yet I thought he had a look of triumph underlying all as though he had already done much and was near the end of an achievement

Partly from a scruple of delicacy—which I dare say came too late—partly from the pleasure of startling an acquaintance I desired to make my presence known to him without delay

I got suddenly to my feet, and stepped forward

Northmour! said I

I have never had so shocking a surprise in all my days He leaped on me without a word something shone in his hand and he struck for my heart with a dagger At the same moment I knocked him head over heels Whether it was my quickness or his own uncertainty I know not but the blade only grazed my shoulder while the hilt and his fist struck me violently on the mouth

I fled but not far I had often and often observed the capabilities of the sand-hills for protracted ambush or stealthy advances and retreats and not ten yards from the scene of the scuffle plumped down again upon the grass The lantern had fallen and gone out But what was my astonishment to see Northmour slip at a bound into the pavilion and hear him bar the door behind him with a clang of iron!

He had not pursued me He had run away Northmour whom I knew for the most implacable and daring of men had run away! I could scarce believe my reason and yet in this strange business where all was incredible there was nothing to make a work about in an incredibility more or less For why was the pavilion secretly prepared? Why had Northmour landed with his guests at dead of night in half a gale of wind and with the floe scarce covered? Why had he sought to kill me? Had he not recognised my voice? I wondered And above all how had he come to have a dagger ready in his hand? A dagger or even a sharp knife seemed out of keeping with the age in which we lived

and a gentleman landing from his yacht on the shore of his own estate even although it was at night and with some mysterious circumstances, does not usually as a matter of fact walk thus prepared for deadly onslaught The more I reflected the further I felt at sea I recapitulated the elements of mystery counting them on my fingers the pavilion secretly prepared for guests, the guests landed at the risk of their lives and to the imminent peril of the yacht the guests or at least one of them in undisguised and seemingly cause less terror Northmour with a naked weapon Northmour stabbing his most intimate acquaintance at a word last and not least strange Northmour fleeing from the man whom he had sought to murder and barricading himself like a hunted creature behind the door of the pavilion Here were at least six separate causes of extreme surprise each part and parcel with the others and forming all together one consistent story I felt almost ashamed to believe my own senses

As I thus stood transfixed with wonder I began to grow painfully conscious of the injuries I had received in the scuffle skulked round among the sand hills, and by a devious path regained the shelter of the wood On the way the old nurse passed again within several yards of me still carrying her lantern, on the return journey to the mansion house of Graden This made a seventh suspicious feature in the case Northmour and his guests, it appeared were to cook and do the cleaning for themselves while the old woman continued to inhabit the big empty barrack among the policies There must surely be great cause for secrecy when so many inconveniences were confronted to preserve it

So thinking I made my way to the den For greater security I trod out the embers of the fire and lit my lantern to examine the wound upon my shoulder It was a trifling hurt although it bled somewhat freely, and I dressed it as well as I could (for its position made it difficult to reach) with some rag and cold water from the spring While I was thus busied I mentally declared war against Northmour and his mystery I am not an angry man by nature and I believe there was more curiosity than resentment in my heart But war I certainly declared and by way of preparation I got out my revolver and having drawn the charges cleaned and reloaded it with scrupulous care Next I became preoccupied about my horse It might break loose or fall to neighing and so betray my camp in the Sea Wood I determined to rid myself of its neighbourhood and long before dawn I was leading it over the links in the direction of the fisher village

III

TELLS HOW I BECAME ACQUAINTED WITH MY WIFE

FOR TWO DAYS I skulked round the pavilion profiting by the uneven surface of the links I became an adept in the necessary tactics These low hillocks and shallow dells running one into another became a kind of cloak of darkness

for my entralling but perhaps dishonourable, pursuit Yet in spite of this advantage I could learn but little of Northmour or his guests

Fresh provisions were brought under cover of darkness by the old woman from the mansion house Northmour, and the young lady sometimes together but more often singly would walk for an hour or two at a time on the beach beside the quicksand I could not but conclude that this promenade was chosen with an eye to secrecy, for the spot was open to the seaward But it suited me not less excellently the highest and most accidented of the sandhills immediately adjoined, and from these lying flat in a hollow I could overlook Northmour or the young lady as they walked

The tall man seemed to have disappeared Not only did he never cross the threshold but he never as much as showed face at a window or, at least not so far as I could see for I dared not creep forward beyond a certain distance in the day, since the upper floor commanded the bottoms of the links and at night when I could venture farther the lower windows were barricaded as if to stand a siege Sometimes I thought the tall man must be confined to bed for I remembered the feebleness of his gait and sometimes I thought he must have gone clear away and that Northmour and the young lady remained alone together in the pavilion The idea even then displeased me

Whether or not this pair were man and wife I had seen abundant reason to doubt the friendliness of their relation Although I could hear nothing of what they said and rarely so much as glean a decided expression on the face of either, there was a distance almost a stiffness in their bearing which showed them to be either unfamiliar or at enmity The girl walked faster when she was with Northmour than when she was alone, and I conceived that any inclination between a man and a woman would rather delay than accelerate the step Moreover she kept a good yard free of him and trailed her umbrella as if it were a barrier on the side between them Northmour kept sidling closer and as the girl retired from his advance, their course lay at a sort of diagonal across the beach and would have landed them in the surf had it been long enough continued But when this was imminent, the girl would unostentatiously change sides and put Northmour between her and the sea I watched these manœuvres for my part, with high enjoyment and approval, and chuckled to myself at every move

On the morning of the third day, she walked alone for some time and I perceived to my great concern, that she was more than once in tears You will see that my heart was already interested more than I supposed She had a firm yet airy motion of the body and carried her head with unimaginable grace, every step was a thing to look at, and she seemed in my eyes to breathe sweet ness and distinction

The day was so agreeable being calm and sunshiny with a tranquil sea, and yet with a healthful piquancy and vigour in the air that contrary to custom, she was tempted forth a second time to walk On this occasion she was accompanied by Northmour and they had been but a short while on the beach when I saw him take forcible possession of her hand She struggled, and uttered

a cry that was almost a scream I sprang to my feet unmindful of my strange position but, ere I had taken a step I saw Northmour bare headed and bowing very low as if to apologise and dropped again at once into my ambush A few words were interchanged and then with another bow, he left the beach to return to the pavilion He passed not far from me and I could see him, flushed and lowering and cutting savagely with his cane among the grass It was not without satisfaction that I recognised my own handiwork in a great cut under his right eye, and a considerable discolouration round the socket

For some time the girl remained where he had left her looking out past the islet and over the bright sea Then with a start as one who throws off preoccupation and puts energy again upon its mettle she broke into a rapid and decisive walk She also was much incensed by what had passed She had forgotten where she was And I beheld her walk straight into the borders of the quicksand where it is most abrupt and dangerous Two or three steps farther and her life would have been in serious jeopardy when I slid down the face of the sand hill which is there precipitous, and, running half-way forward, called to her to stop

She did so and turned round There was not a tremor of fear in her behaviour and she marched directly up to me like a queen I was barefoot, and clad like a common sailor save for an Egyptian scarf round my waist, and she probably took me at first for some one from the fisher village, straying after bait As for her when I thus saw her face to face her eyes set steadily and imperiously upon mine I was filled with admiration and astonishment and thought her even more beautiful than I had looked to find her Nor could I think enough of one who acting with so much boldness yet preserved a maidly air that was both quaint and engaging for my wife kept an old fashioned precision of manner through all her admirable life—an excellent thing in woman since it sets another value on her sweet familiarities

'What does this mean?' she asked

'You were walking I told her, directly into Graden Floe'

'You do not belong to these parts, she said again You speak like an educated man

'I believe I have right to that name' said I although in this disguise"

But her woman's eye had already detected the sash

Oh! she cried your sash betrays you

You have said the word *betray*," I resumed 'May I ask you not to betray me? I was obliged to disclose myself in your interest, but if Northmour learned my presence it might be worse than disagreeable for me

Do you know she asked to whom you are speaking?

'Not to Mr Northmour's wife' I asked by way of answer

She shook her head All this while she was studying my face with an embarrassing intentness Then she broke out—

You have an honest face Be honest like your face sir and tell me what you want and what you are afraid of Do you think I could hurt you? I believe

you have far more power to injure me! And yet you do not look unkind What do you mean—you a gentleman—by skulking like a spy about this desolate place? Tell me she said who is it you hate?

I hate no one I answered and I fear no one face to face My name is Cassilis—Frank Cassilis I lead the life of a vagabond for my own good pleasure I am one of Northmour's oldest friends and three nights ago when I addressed him on these links, he stabbed me in the shoulder with a knife'

It was you!' she said

'Why he did so I continued disregarding the interruption is more than I can guess and more than I care to know I have not many friends nor am I very susceptible to friendship but no man shall drive me from a place by terror I had camped in Graden Sea Wood ere he came, I camp in it still If you think I mean harm to you or yours madam the remedy is in your hand Tell him that my camp is in the Hemlock Den and to night he can stab me in safety while I sleep

With this I doffed my cap to her and scrambled up once more among the sand hills I do not know why but I felt a prodigious sense of injustice and felt like a hero and a martyr while as a matter of fact I had not a word to say in my defence, nor so much as one plausible reason to offer for my conduct I had stayed at Graden out of a curiosity natural enough but undignified, and though there was another motive growing in along with the first, it was not one which at that period I could have properly explained to the lady of my heart

Certainly that night I thought of no one else and though her whole conduct and position seemed suspicious I could not find it in my heart to entertain a doubt of her integrity I could have staked my life that she was clear of blame and though all was dark at the present that the explanation of the mystery would show her part in these events to be both right and needful It was true let me cudgel my imagination as I pleased that I could invent no theory of her relations to Northmour but I felt none the less sure of my conclusion because it was founded on instinct in place of reason and as I may say went to sleep that night with the thought of her under my pillow

Next day she came out about the same hour alone and as soon as the sand hills concealed her from the pavilion drew nearer to the edge and called me by name in guarded tones I was astonished to observe that she was deadly pale and seemingly under the influence of strong emotion

Mr Cassilis' she cried Mr Cassilis'

I appeared at once and leaped down upon the beach A remarkable air of relief overspread her countenance as soon as she saw me

Oh' she cried with a hoarse sound, like one whose bosom has been lightened of a weight And then, Thank God you are still safe! she added, I knew if you were you would be here (Was not this strange? So swiftly and wisely does Nature prepare our hearts for these great life long intimacies that both my wife and I had been given a presentiment on this the second day of our acquaintance I had even then hoped that she would seek me she had felt sure that she would find me) Do not she went on swiftly do not stay

in this place Promise me that you will sleep no longer in that wood You do not know how I suffer all last night I could not sleep for thinking of your peril

Peril? I repeated Peril from whom? From Northmour?

Not so she said Did you think I would tell him after what you said?

Not from Northmour? I repeated Then how? From whom? I see none to be afraid of

You must not ask me was her reply for I am not free to tell you Only believe me and go hence—believe me and go away quickly quickly for your life!

An appeal to his alarm is never a good plan to rid oneself of a spirited young man My obstinacy was but increased by what she said and I made it a point of honour to remain And her solicitude for my safety still more confirmed me in the resolve

'You must not think me inquisitive madam I replied but if Graden is so dangerous a place you yourself perhaps remain here at some risk

She only looked at me reproachfully

You and your father— I resumed but she interrupted me almost with a gasp

My father! How do you know that? she cried

'I saw you together when you landed was my answer and I do not know why but it seemed satisfactory to both of us as indeed it was the truth But I continued you need have no fear from me I see you have some reason to be secret and you may believe me your secret is as safe with me as if I were in Graden Floe I have scarce spoken to any one for years my horse is my only companion and even he poor beast, is not beside me You see then you may count on me for silence So tell me the truth my dear young lady are you not in danger?

Mr Northmour says you are an honourable man," she returned and I believe it when I see you I will tell you so much you are right we are in dreadful dreadful danger and you share it by remaining where you are

'Ah' said I you have heard of me from Northmour? And he gives me a good character?

I asked him about you last night was her reply I pretended she hesitated I pretended to have met you long ago and spoken to you of him It was not true but I could not help myself without betraying you and you had put me in a difficulty He praised you highly

And—you may permit me one question—does this danger come from Northmour? I asked

From Mr Northmour? she cried Oh no he stays with us to share it

'While you propose that I should run away? I asked You do not rate me very high

Why should you stay? she asked 'You are no friend of ours '

I know not what came over me for I had not been conscious of a similar weakness since I was a child but I was so mortified by this retort that my eyes pricked and filled with tears as I continued to gaze upon her face

No no' she said in a changed voice I do not mean the words unkindly"

It was I who offended I said and I held out my hand with a look of appeal that somehow touched her for she gave me hers at once and even eagerly I held it for awhile in mine and gazed into her eyes It was she who first tore her hand away and forgetting all about her request and the promise she had sought to extort ran at the top of her speed and without turning, till she was out of sight And then I knew that I loved her and thought in my glad heart that she—she herself—was not indifferent to my suit Many a time she has denied it in after days but it was with a smiling and not a serious denial For my part I am sure our hands would not have lain so closely in each other if she had not begun to melt to me already And when all is said it is no great contention, since, by her own avowal she began to love me on the morrow

And yet on the morrow very little took place She came and called me down as on the day before upbraided me for lingering at Graden and when she found I was still obdurate began to ask me more particularly as to my arrival I told her by what series of accidents I had come to witness their disembarkation and how I had determined to remain partly from the interest which had been wakened in me by Northmours guests and partly because of his own murderous attack As to the former I fear I was disingenuous and led her to regard herself as having been an attraction to me from the first moment that I saw her on the links It relieves my heart to make the confession even now, when my wife is with God and already knows all things and the honesty of my purpose even in this for while she lived although it often pricked my conscience I had never the hardihood to undeceive her Even a little secret in such a married life as ours is like the rose leaf which kept the Princess from her sleep

From this the talk branched into other subjects and I told her much about my lonely and wandering existence she for her part giving ear, and saying little Although we spoke very naturally and latterly on topics that might seem indifferent, we were both sweetly agitated Too soon it was time for her to go and we separated as if by mutual consent without shaking hands for both knew that between us, it was no idle ceremony

The next and that was the fourth day of our acquaintance we met in the same spot, but early in the morning with much familiarity and yet much timidity on either side When she had once more spoken about my danger—and that I understood was her excuse for coming—I who had prepared a great deal of talk during the night began to tell her how highly I valued her kind interest, and how no one had ever cared to hear about my life nor had I ever cared to relate it before yesterday Suddenly she interrupted me saying with vehemence—

And yet, if you knew who I was you would not so much as speak to me!"

I told her such a thought was madness and little as we had met I counted her already a dear friend but my protestations seemed only to make her more desperate

My father is in hiding!" she cried

"My dear" I said forgetting for the first time to add "young lady" what do I care? If he were in hiding twenty times over, would it make one thought of change in you?

Ah but the cause! she cried the cause! It is— she faltered for a second— it is disgraceful to us!

IV

TELLS IN WHAT A STARTLING MANNER I LEARNED THAT I WAS NOT ALONE
IN GRADEN SEA WOOD

THIS was my wife's story as I drew it from her among tears and sobs Her name was Clara Huddlestone it sounded very beautiful in my ears but not so beautiful as that other name of Clara Cassilis which she wore during the longer and I thank God the happier portion of her life Her father, Bernard Huddlestone had been a private banker in a very large way of business Many years before his affairs becoming disordered he had been led to try dangerous and at last criminal expedients to retrieve himself from ruin All was in vain he became more and more cruelly involved and found his honour lost at the same moment with his fortune About this period Northmour had been courting his daughter with great assiduity though with small encouragement and to him knowing him thus disposed in his favour Bernard Huddlestone turned for help in his extremity It was not merely ruin and dishonour nor merely a legal condemnation that the unhappy man had brought upon his head It seems he could have gone to prison with a light heart What he feared what kept him awake at night or recalled him from slumber into frenzy was some secret sudden and unlawful attempt upon his life Hence he desired to bury his existence and escape to one of the islands in the South Pacific and it was in Northmour's yacht the *Red Earl*, that he designed to go The yacht picked them up clandestinely upon the coast of Wales and had once more deposited them at Graden till she could be refitted and provisioned for the longer voyage Nor could Clara doubt that her hand had been stipulated as the price of passage For although Northmour was neither unkind nor even discourteous he had shown himself in several instances somewhat overbold in speech and manner

I listened I need not say with fixed attention and put many questions as to the more mysterious part It was in vain She had no clear idea of what the blow was nor of how it was expected to fall Her father's alarm was unfeigned and physically prostrating, and he had thought more than once of making an unconditional surrender to the police But the scheme was finally abandoned for he was convinced that not even the strength of our English prisons could shelter him from his pursuers He had had many affairs with Italy and with Italians resident in London in the later years of his business and these last as Clara fancied were somehow connected with the doom that threatened him He had shown great terror at the presence of an Italian sea-

man on board the *Red Earl*, and had bitterly and repeatedly accused Northmour in consequence The latter had protested that Beppo (that was the sea man's name) was a capital fellow and could be trusted to the death but Mr Huddlestone had continued ever since to declare that all was lost, that it was only a question of days and that Beppo would be the ruin of him yet

I regarded the whole story as the hallucination of a mind shaken by calamity He had suffered heavy loss by his Italian transactions and hence the sight of an Italian was hateful to him and the principal part in his nightmare would naturally enough be played by one of that nation

'What your father wants I said, is a good doctor and some calming medicine"

But Mr Northmour? objected your mother He is untroubled by losses, and yet he shares in this terror

I could not help laughing at what I considered her simplicity

My dear said I you have told me yourself what reward he has to look for All is fair in love you must remember and if Northmour foments your father's terrors it is not at all because he is afraid of any Italian man but simply because he is infatuated with a charming English woman

She reminded me of his attack upon myself on the night of the disembarkation and this I was unable to explain In short and from one thing to another it was agreed between us, that I should set out at once for the fisher village, Graden Wester as it was called look up all the newspapers I could find and see for myself if there seemed any basis of fact for these continued alarms The next morning at the same hour and place I was to make my report to Clara She said no more on that occasion about my departure nor indeed did she make it a secret that she clung to the thought of my proximity as something helpful and pleasant, and for my part, I could not have left her if she had gone upon her knees to ask it

I reached Graden Wester before ten in the forenoon for in those days I was an excellent pedestrian and the distance as I think I have said was little over seven miles, fine walking all the way upon the springy turf The village is one of the bleakest on that coast which is saying much there is a church in a hollow a miserable haven in the rocks where many boats have been lost as they returned from fishing, two or three score of stone houses arranged along the beach and in two streets one leading from the harbour, and another striking out from it at right angles, and, at the corner of these two a very dark and cheerless tavern by way of principal hotel

I had dressed myself somewhat more suitably to my station in life and at once called upon the minister in his little manse beside the graveyard He knew me although it was more than nine years since we had met and when I told him that I had been long upon a walking tour and was behind with the news readily lent me an armful of newspapers dating from a month back to the day before With these I sought the tavern and ordering some breakfast sat down to study the Huddlestone Failure

It had been it appeared, a very flagrant case Thousands of persons were reduced to poverty, and one in particular had blown out his brains as soon

as payment was suspended It was strange to myself that, while I read these details I continued rather to sympathise with Mr Huddlestane than with his victims so complete already was the empire of my love for my wife A price was naturally set upon the banker's head and as the case was inexcusable and the public indignation thoroughly aroused, the unusual figure of £750 was offered for his capture He was reported to have large sums of money in his possession One day he had been heard of in Spain the next, there was sure intelligence that he was still lurking between Manchester and Liverpool or along the border of Wales and the day after a telegram would announce his arrival in Cuba or Yucatan But in all this there was no word of an Italian nor any sign of mystery

In the very last paper however there was one item not so clear The accountants who were charged to verify the failure had, it seemed come upon the traces of a very large number of thousands which figured for some time in the transactions of the house of Huddlestane but which came from nowhere and disappeared in the same mysterious fashion It was only once referred to by name and then under the initials 'X X' but it had plainly been floated for the first time into the business at a period of great depression some six years ago The name of a distinguished Royal personage had been mentioned by rumour in connection with this sum The cowardly desperado —such I remember was the editorial expression—was supposed to have escaped with a large part of this mysterious fund still in his possession

I was still brooding over the fact and trying to torture it into some connection with Mr Huddlestane's danger when a man entered the tavern and asked for some bread and cheese with a decided foreign accent.

"*Siete Italiano?*" said I

"*Sì, signor,*" was his reply

I said it was unusually far north to find one of his compatriots, at which he shrugged his shoulders and replied that a man would go anywhere to find work What work he could hope to find at Graden Wester I was totally unable to conceive and the incident struck so unpleasantly upon my mind, that I asked the landlord while he was counting me some change whether he had ever before seen an Italian in the village He said he had once seen some Norwegians who had been shipwrecked on the other side of Graden Ness and rescued by the lifeboat from Cauldhaven

No' said I but an Italian like the man who has just had bread and cheese"

'What?' cried he 'yon black avised fellow wi the teeth? Was he an I taltan? Weel yon's the first that ever I saw an I dare say he's like to be the last'

Even as he was speaking I raised my eyes and casting a glance into the street, beheld three men in earnest conversation together and not thirty yards away One of them was my recent companion in the tavern parlour the other two by their handsome sallow features and soft hats should evidently belong to the same race A crowd of village children stood around them gesticulating and talking gibberish in imitation The trio looked singularly foreign to the bleak dirty street in which they were standing and the dark grey

heaven that overspread them, and I confess my incredulity received at that moment a shock from which it never recovered I might reason with myself as I pleased but I could not argue down the effect of what I had seen, and I began to share in the Italian terror

It was already drawing towards the close of the day before I had returned the newspapers at the manse, and got well forward on to the links on my way home I shall never forget that walk It grew very cold and boisterous the wind sang in the short grass about my feet thin rain showers came running on the gusts and an immense mountain range of clouds began to arise out of the bosom of the sea It would be hard to imagine a more dismal evening and whether it was from these external influences or because my nerves were already affected by what I had heard and seen, my thoughts were as gloomy as the weather

The upper windows of the pavilion commanded a considerable spread of links in the direction of Graden Wester To avoid observation it was necessary to hug the beach until I had gained cover from the higher sand hills on the little headland when I might strike across through the hollows, for the margin of the wood The sun was about setting the tide was low and all the quicksands uncovered and I was moving along lost in unpleasant thought, when I was suddenly thunderstruck to perceive the prints of human feet They ran parallel to my own course but low down upon the beach instead of along the border of the turf, and when I examined them, I saw at once, by the size and coarseness of the impression that it was a stranger to that way Not only so, but from the recklessness of the course which he had followed steering near to the most formidable portions of the sand he was as evidently a stranger to the country and to the ill repute of Graden beach

Step by step I followed the prints until a quarter of a mile farther I beheld them die away into the south eastern boundary of Graden Floe There whoever he was the miserable man had perished One or two gulls who had, perhaps seen him disappear wheeled over his sepulchre with their usual melancholy piping The sun had broken through the clouds by a last effort and coloured the wide level of quicksand with a dusky purple I stood for some time gazing at the spot, chilled and disheartened by my own reflections and with a strong and commanding consciousness of death I remember wondering how long the tragedy had taken and whether his screams had been audible at the pavilion And then, making a strong resolution I was about to tear myself away, when a gust fiercer than usual fell upon this quarter of the beach and I saw now whirling high in air, now skimming lightly across the surface of the sands a soft, black felt hat, somewhat conical in shape, such as I had remarked already on the heads of the Italians

I believe but I am not sure that I uttered a cry The wind was driving the hat shoreward, and I ran round the border of the floe to be ready against its arrival The gust fell, dropping the hat for a while upon the quicksand, and then, once more freshening landed it a few yards from where I stood I seized it with the interest you may imagine It had seen some service indeed, it was rustier than either of those I had seen that day upon the street The lining

was red stamped with the name of the maker which I have forgotten and that of the place of manufacture *Venedig* This (it is not yet forgotten) was the name given by the Austrians to the beautiful city of Venice then and for long after a part of their dominions

The shock was complete I saw imaginary Italians upon every side and for the first and I may say for the last time in my experience became overpowered by what is called a panic terror I knew nothing that is to be afraid of and yet I admit that I was heartily afraid and it was with a sensible reluctance that I returned to my exposed and solitary camp in the Sea Wood

There I ate some cold porridge which had been left over from the night before, for I was disinclined to make a fire and, feeling strengthened and reassured dismissed all these fanciful terrors from my mind, and lay down to sleep with composure

How long I may have slept it is impossible for me to guess but I was awakened at last by a sudden blinding flash of light into my face It woke me like a blow In an instant I was upon my knees But the light had gone as suddenly as it came The darkness was intense And as it was blowing great guns from the sea and pouring with rain, the noises of the storm effectually concealed all others

It was I dare say half a minute before I regained my self possession But for two circumstances I should have thought I had been awakened by some new and vivid form of nightmare First the flap of my tent which I had shut carefully when I retired was now unfastened and second I could still perceive with a sharpness that excluded any theory of hallucination the smell of hot metal and of burning oil The conclusion was obvious I had been wakened by some one flashing a bull's eye lantern in my face It had been but a flash and away He had seen my face and then gone I asked myself the object of so strange a proceeding and the answer came pat The man whoever he was had thought to recognise me and he had not There was yet another question unresolved and to this I may say I feared to give an answer, if he had recognised me what would he have done?

My fears were immediately diverted from myself, for I saw that I had been visited in a mistake and I became persuaded that some dreadful danger threatened the pavilion It required some nerve to issue forth into the black and intricate thicket which surrounded and overhung the den but I groped my way to the links drenched with rain beaten upon and deafened by the gusts, and fearing at every step to lay my hand upon some lurking adversary The darkness was so complete that I might have been surrounded by an army and yet none the wiser and the uproar of the gale so loud that my hearing was as useless as my sight

For the rest of that night which seemed interminably long I patrolled the vicinity of the pavilion, without seeing a living creature or hearing any noise but the concert of the wind the sea and the rain A light in the upper story filtered through a cranny of the shutter, and kept me company till the approach of dawn

V

TELLS OF AN INTERVIEW BETWEEN NORTHMOUR, CLARA, AND MYSELF

WITH the first peep of day, I retired from the open to my old lair among the sand hills there to await the coming of my wife. The morning was grey wild and melancholy. The wind moderated before sunrise and then went about, and blew in puffs from the shore. The sea began to go down, but the rain still fell without mercy. Over all the wilderness of links there was not a creature to be seen. Yet I felt sure the neighbourhood was alive with skulking foes. The light that had been so suddenly and surprisingly flashed upon my face as I lay sleeping, and the hat that had been blown ashore by the wind from over Graden Floe were two speaking signals of the peril that environed Clara and the party in the pavilion.

It was perhaps half past seven or nearer eight before I saw the door open and that dear figure come towards me in the rain. I was waiting for her on the beach before she had crossed the sand-hills.

I have had such trouble to come! she cried. They did not wish me to go walking in the rain.

Clara, I said, you are not frightened!

No' said she, with a simplicity that filled my heart with confidence. For my wife was the bravest as well as the best of women in my experience. I have not found the two go always together but with her they did, and she combined the extreme of fortitude with the most endearing and beautiful virtues.

I told her what had happened and, though her cheek grew visibly paler, she retained perfect control over her senses.

You see now that I am safe, said I, in conclusion. They do not mean to harm me, for had they chosen, I was a dead man last night.

She laid her hand upon my arm.

'And I had no presentiment!' she cried.

Her accent thrilled me with delight. I put my arm about her and strained her to my side and before either of us was aware her hands were on my shoulders and my lips upon her mouth. Yet up to that moment no word of love had passed between us. To this day I remember the touch of her cheek which was wet and cold with the rain, and many a time since when she has been washing her face, I have kissed it again for the sake of that morning on the beach. Now that she is taken from me and I finish my pilgrimage alone I recall our old loving kindnesses and the deep honesty and affection which united us and my present loss seems but a trifle in comparison.

We may have thus stood for some seconds—for time passes quickly with lovers—before we were startled by a peal of laughter close at hand. It was not natural mirth but seemed to be affected in order to conceal an angrier feeling. We both turned, though I still kept my left arm about Clara's waist.

nor did she seek to withdraw herself and there a few paces off upon the beach stood Northmour his head lowered his hands behind his back his nostrils white with passion

‘Ah! Cassilis’ he said as I disclosed my face

That same said I for I was not at all put about

And so Miss Huddlestone he continued slowly but savagely this is how you keep your faith to your father and to me? This is the value you set upon your father’s life? And you are so infatuated with this young gentleman that you must brave ruin and decency, and common human caution—

“Miss Huddlestone— I was beginning to interrupt him when he in his turn cut in brutally—

You hold your tongue” said he “I am speaking to that girl”

That girl as you call her is my wife said I, and my wife only leaned a little nearer so that I knew she had affirmed my words

Your what? he cried You lie!

“Northmour I said we all know you have a bad temper and I am the last man to be irritated by words For all that I propose that you speak lower, for I am convinced that we are not alone

He looked round him, and it was plain my remark had in some degree sobered his passion “What do you mean?” he asked

I only said one word Italians

He swore a round oath and looked at us from one to the other

Mr Cassilis knows all that I know said my wife

“What I want to know he broke out is where the devil Mr Cassilis comes from and what the devil Mr Cassilis is doing here You say you are married that I do not believe If you were Graden Floe would soon divorce you four minutes and a half Cassilis I keep my private cemetery for my friends

It took somewhat longer said I ‘for that Italian’

He looked at me for a moment half daunted and then, almost civilly, asked me to tell my story You have too much the advantage of me Cassilis’ he added I complied of course and he listened with several ejaculations, while I told him how I had come to Graden that it was I whom he had tried to murder on the night of landing and what I had subsequently seen and heard of the Italians

‘Well said he when I had done it is here at last there is no mistake about that And what may I ask do you propose to do?’

I propose to stay with you and lend a hand said I

You are a brave man he returned with a peculiar intonation

I am not afraid said I

And so” he continued ‘I am to understand that you two are married? And you stand up to it before my face Miss Huddlestone?’

We are not yet married said Clara but we shall be as soon as we can”

“Bravo! cried Northmour And the bargain? D—n it you’re not a fool young woman I may call a spade a spade with you How about the bargain? You know as well as I do what your father’s life depends upon I have only

to put my hand under my coat tails and walk away and his throat would be cut before the evening

Yes Mr Northmour returned Clara with great spirit but that is what you will never do You made a bargain that was unworthy of a gentleman but you are a gentleman for all that and you will never desert a man whom you have begun to help

Aha' said he You think I will give my yacht for nothing? You think I will risk my life and liberty for love of the old gentleman and then, I suppose be best man at the wedding to wind up? Well he added with an odd smile perhaps you are not altogether wrong But ask Cassilis here *He* knows me Am I a man to trust? Am I safe and scrupulous? Am I kind?

I know you talk a great deal and sometimes I think very foolishly" replied Clara but I know you are a gentleman and I am not the least afraid

He looked at her with a peculiar approval and admiration then turning to me, Do you think I would give her up without struggle Frank' said he I tell you plainly, you look out The next time we come to blows—"

'Will make the third I interrupted smiling

'Aye true, so it will he said I had forgotten Well the third times lucky

The third time you mean you will have the crew of the *Red Earl* to help," I said

Do you hear him?" he asked turning to my wife

I hear two men speaking like cowards' said she I should despise myself either to think or speak like that And neither of you believe one word that you are saying which makes it the more wicked and silly"

She's a trump' cried Northmour But she's not yet Mrs Cassilis I say no more The present is not for me

Then my wife surprised me

I leave you here she said suddenly My father has been too long alone But remember this you are to be friends for you are both good friends to me

She has since told me her reason for this step As long as she remained she declares that we two would have continued to quarrel and I suppose that she was right, for when she was gone we fell at once into a sort of confidentiality

Northmour stared after her as she went away over the sand hill

She is the only woman in the world' he exclaimed with an oath "Look at her action'

I for my part, leaped at this opportunity for a little further light

'See here Northmour, said I we are all in a tight place are we not?

I believe you my boy he answered looking me in the eyes, and with great emphasis We have all hell upon us, that's the truth You may believe me or not but I'm afraid of my life

Tell me one thing said I 'What are they after these Italians? What do they want with Mr Huddlestome?

'Don't you know?' he cried The black old scamp had *carbonaro* funds on a

deposit—two hundred and eighty thousand and of course he gambled it away on stocks There was to have been a revolution in the Tridentino or Parma but the revolution is off and the whole wasp's nest is after Huddlestone We shall all be lucky if we can save our skins

The *carbonari!*" I exclaimed God help him indeed!"

"Amen!" said Northmour And now, look here I have said that we are in a fix and frankly I shall be glad of your help If I can't save Huddlestone I want at least to save the girl Come and stay in the pavilion, and there's my hand on it I shall act as your friend until the old man is either clear or dead But he added once that is settled, you become my rival once again and I warn you—mind yourself

Done! said I and we shook hands

And now let us go directly to the fort,' said Northmour, and he began to lead the way through the rain

VI

TELLS OF MY INTRODUCTION TO THE TALL MAN

WE WERE ADMITTED to the pavilion by Clara and I was surprised by the completeness and security of the defences A barricade of great strength and yet easy to displace supported the door against any violence from without and the shutters of the dining-room into which I was led directly and which was feebly illuminated by a lamp were even more elaborately fortified The panels were strengthened by bars and crossbars and these in their turn were kept in position by a system of braces and struts some abutting on the floor some on the roof and others in fine against the opposite wall of the apartment It was at once a solid and well designed piece of carpentry, and I did not seek to conceal my admiration

I am the engineer said Northmour You remember the planks in the garden? Behold them?

I did not know you had so many talents said I

Are you armed? he continued pointing to an array of guns and pistols, all in admirable order which stood in line against the wall or were displayed upon the sideboard

'Thank you I returned, I have gone armed since our last encounter But to tell you the truth I have had nothing to eat since early yesterday evening

Northmour produced some cold meat to which I eagerly set myself and a bottle of good Burgundy by which wet as I was I did not scruple to profit I have always been an extreme temperance man on principle but it is useless to push principle to excess, and on this occasion I believe that I finished three-quarters of the bottle As I ate, I still continued to admire the preparations for defence

'We could stand a siege, I said at length

'Ye—es,' drawled Northmour, 'a very little one per—haps It is not so much the strength of the pavilion I misdoubt, it is the double danger that kills me If we get to shooting wild as the country is some one is sure to hear it and then—why then it's the same thing only different as they say caged by law, or killed by *carbonari* There's the choice It is a devilish bad thing to have the law against you in this world and so I tell the old gentle man upstairs He is quite of my way of thinking'

Speaking of that' said I, 'what kind of person is he?'

'Oh, he!' cried the other, 'he's a rancid fellow as far as he goes I should like to have his neck wrung to morrow by all the devils in Italy I am not in this affair for him You take me? I made a bargain for Missy's hand, and I mean to have it too'

'That by the way,' said I, 'I understand But how will Mr Huddlestane take my intrusion?'

Leave that to Clara,' returned Northmour

I could have struck him in the face for this coarse familiarity, but I respected the truce, as, I am bound to say did Northmour and so long as the danger continued not a cloud arose in our relation I bear him this testimony with the most unfeigned satisfaction nor am I without pride when I look back upon my own behaviour For surely no two men were ever left in a position so invidious and irritating

As soon as I had done eating we proceeded to inspect the lower floor Window by window we tried the different supports now and then making an inconsiderable change, and the strokes of the hammer sounded with startling loudness through the house I proposed I remember to make loop holes but he told me they were already made in the windows of the upper story It was an anxious business this inspection and left me down hearted There were two doors and five windows to protect and counting Clara only four of us to defend them against an unknown number of foes I communicated my doubts to Northmour, who assured me, with unmoved composure that he entirely shared them

'Before morning' said he 'we shall all be butchered and buried in Graden Floe For me that is written'

I could not help shuddering at the mention of the quicksand but reminded Northmour that our enemies had spared me in the wood

Do not flatter yourself said he Then you were not in the same boat with the old gentleman, now you are It's the floe for all of us mark my words

I trembled for Clara and just then her dear voice was heard calling us to come upstairs Northmour showed me the way and when he had reached the landing knocked at the door of what used to be called *My Uncle's Bedroom*, as the founder of the pavilion had designed it especially for himself

Come in, Northmour, come in dear Mr Cassilis' said a voice from within

Pushing open the door Northmour admitted me before him into the apartment As I came in I could see the daughter slipping out by the side door

into the study, which had been prepared as her bedroom. In the bed which was drawn back against the wall instead of standing as I had last seen it boldly across the window sat Bernard Huddlestane the defaulting banker. Little as I had seen of him by the shifting light of the lantern on the links I had no difficulty in recognising him for the same. He had a long and sallow countenance surrounded by a long red beard and side whiskers. His broken nose and high cheekbones gave him somewhat the air of a Kalmuck and his light eyes shone with the excitement of a high fever. He wore a skull cap of black silk a huge Bible lay open before him on the bed, with a pair of gold spectacles in the place and a pile of other books on the stand by his side. The green curtains lent a cadaverous shade to his cheek and as he sat propped on pillows his great stature was painfully hunched and his head protruded till it overhung his knees. I believe if he had not died otherwise he must have fallen a victim to consumption in the course of but a very few weeks.

He held out to me a hand long thin, and disagreeably hairy.

'Come in come in' Mr Cassilis said he 'Another protector—ahem—another protector. Always welcome as a friend of my daughter's Mr Cassilis. How they have rallied about me my daughter's friends! May God in heaven bless and reward them for it!'

I gave him my hand of course because I could not help it but the sympathy I had been prepared to feel for Clara's father was immediately soured by his appearance and the wheedling unreal tones in which he spoke.

'Cassilis is a good man' said Northmour 'worth ten'.

'So I hear' cried Mr Huddlestane eagerly 'so my girl tells me. Ah Mr Cassilis my sin has found me out you see! I am very low very low, but I hope equally penitent. We must all come to the throne of grace at last, Mr Cassilis. For my part I come late indeed, but with unfeigned humility, I trust.'

Fiddle de dee!' said Northmour roughly.

'No no dear Northmour' cried the banker 'You must not say that, you must not try to shake me. You forget my dear, good boy, you forget I may be called this very night before my Maker.'

His excitement was pitiful to behold and I felt myself grow indignant with Northmour whose infidel opinions I well knew and heartily derided, as he continued to taunt the poor sinner out of his humour of repentance.

'Pooh my dear Huddlestane!' said he 'You do yourself injustice. You are a man of the world inside and out, and were up to all kinds of mischief before I was born. Your conscience is tanned like South American leather—only you forget to tan your liver, and that if you will believe me is the seat of the annoyance.'

'Rogue rogue! bad boy!' said Mr Huddlestane, shaking his finger. 'I am no precisian if you come to that I always hated a precisian but I never lost hold of something better through it all. I have been a bad boy Mr Cassilis I do not seek to deny that but it was after my wife's death and you know with a widower it's a different thing sinful—I won't say no, but there is a gradation we shall hope. And talking of that—Hark!' he broke out

suddenly his hand raised his fingers spread his face racked with interest and terror Only the rain bless God' he added, after a pause and with indescribable relief

For some seconds he lay back among the pillows like a man near to fainting then he gathered himself together and in somewhat tremulous tones, began once more to thank me for the share I was prepared to take in his defence

One question sir said I when he had paused 'Is it true that you have money with you?

He seemed annoyed by the question but admitted with reluctance that he had a little

Well I continued 'it is their money they are after is it not? Why not give it up to them?

"Ah' replied he shaking his head I have tried that already, Mr Cassilis and alas that it should be so' but it is blood they want'

Huddlestone that's a little less than fair said Northmour You should mention that what you offered them was upwards of two hundred thousand short The deficit is worth a reference it is for what they call a cool sum Frank Then, you see, the fellows reason in their clear Italian way and it seems to them as indeed it seems to me that they may just as well have both while they're about it—money and blood together by George and no more trouble for the extra pleasure

Is it in the pavilion?' I asked

It is and I wish it were in the bottom of the sea instead said Northmour, and then suddenly— What are you making faces at me for? he cried to Mr Huddlestone on whom I had unconsciously turned my back Do you think Cassilis would sell you?

Mr Huddlestone protested that nothing had been further from his mind

It is a good thing retorted Northmour in his ugliest manner You might end by wearying us What were you going to say? he added turning to me

I was going to propose an occupation for the afternoon, said I Let us carry that money out piece by piece and lay it down before the pavilion door If the *carbonari* come why it's theirs at any rate

No no cried Mr Huddlestone, it does not it cannot belong to them! It should be distributed *pro rata* among all my creditors'

'Come now Huddlestone said Northmour none of that'

'Well but my daughter,' moaned the wretched man

'Your daughter will do well enough Here are two suitors Cassilis and I neither of us beggars between whom she has to choose And as for myself to make an end of arguments, you have no right to a farthing and, unless I'm much mistaken, you are going to die'

It was certainly very cruelly said, but Mr Huddlestone was a man who attracted little sympathy, and, although I saw him wince and shudder I mentally endorsed the rebuke nay I added a contribution of my own

Northmour and I I said are willing enough to help you to save your life, but not to escape with stolen property

He struggled for a while with himself as though he were on the point of giving way to anger but prudence had the best of the controversy

My dear boys he said do with me or my money what you will I leave all in your hands Let me compose myself '

And so we left him gladly enough I am sure The last that I saw he had once more taken up his great Bible, and with tremulous hands was adjusting his spectacles to read

VII

TELLS HOW A WORD WAS CRIED THROUGH THE PAVILION WINDOW

THE recollection of that afternoon will always be graven on my mind Northmour and I were persuaded that an attack was imminent, and if it had been in our power to alter in any way the order of events that power would have been used to precipitate rather than delay the critical moment The worst was to be anticipated yet we could conceive no extremity so miserable as the suspense we were now suffering I have never been an eager though always a great reader but I never knew books so insipid as those which I took up and cast aside that afternoon in the pavilion Even talk became impossible, as the hours went on One or other was always listening for some sound or peering from an upstairs window over the links And yet not a sign indicated the presence of our foes

We debated over and over again my proposal with regard to the money, and had we been in complete possession of our faculties I am sure we should have condemned it as unwise but we were flustered with alarm, grasped at a straw and determined although it was as much as advertising Mr Huddlestone's presence in the pavilion to carry my proposal into effect

The sum was part in specie part in bank paper, and part in circular notes payable to the name of James Gregory We took it out counted it enclosed it once more in a despatch box belonging to Northmour and prepared a letter in Italian which he tied to the handle It was signed by both of us under oath, and declared that this was all the money which had escaped the failure of the house of Huddlestone This was perhaps the maddest action ever perpetrated by two persons professing to be sane Had the despatch box fallen into other hands than those for which it was intended we stood criminally convicted on our own written testimony but as I have said we were neither of us in a condition to judge soberly and had a thirst for action that drove us to do something right or wrong rather than endure the agony of waiting Moreover, as we were both convinced that the hollows of the links were live with hidden spies upon our movements we hoped that our appearance with the box might lead to a parley and perhaps a compromise

It was nearly three when we issued from the pavilion The rain had taken off, the sun shone quite cheerfully I have never seen the gulls fly so close about the house or approach so fearlessly to human beings On the very

doorstep one flapped heavily past our heads and uttered its wild cry in my very ear

There is an omen for you said Northmour who like all freethinkers was much under the influence of superstition They think we are already dead

I made some light rejoinder but it was with half my heart, for the circumstance had impressed me

A yard or two before the gate on a patch of smooth turf we set down the despatch box and Northmour waved a white handkerchief over his head Nothing replied We raised our voices, and cried aloud in Italian that we were there as ambassadors to arrange the quarrel but the stillness remained unbroken save by the sea gulls and the surf I had a weight at my heart when we desisted and I saw that even Northmour was unusually pale He looked over his shoulder nervously as though he feared that some one had crept between him and the pavilion door

By God he said in a whisper 'this is too much for me'

I replied in the same key Suppose there should be none after all'

'Look there he returned, nodding with his head as though he had been afraid to point

I glanced in the direction indicated and there from the northern quarter of the Sea-Wood beheld a thin column of smoke rising steadily against the now cloudless sky

Northmour' I said (we still continued to talk in whispers) it is not possible to endure this suspense I prefer death fifty times over Stay you here to watch the pavilion I will go forward and make sure if I have to walk right into their camp

He looked once again all round him with puckered eyes and then nodded assentingly to my proposal

My heart beat like a sledge hammer as I set out walking rapidly in the direction of the smoke, and though up to that moment I had felt chill and shivering I was suddenly conscious of a glow of heat over all my body The ground in this direction was very uneven a hundred men might have lain hidden in as many square yards about my path But I had not practised the business in vain chose such routes as cut at the very root of concealment and by keeping along the most convenient ridges commanded several hollows at a time It was not long before I was rewarded for my caution Coming suddenly on to a mound somewhat more elevated than the surrounding hummocks I saw not thirty yards away, a man bent almost double and running as fast as his attitude permitted along the bottom of a gully I had dislodged one of the spies from his ambush As soon as I sighted him I called loudly both in English and Italian and he seeing concealment was no longer possible, straightened himself out leaped from the gully and made off as straight as an arrow for the borders of the wood

It was none of my business to pursue I had learned what I wanted—that we were beleaguered and watched in the pavilion, and I returned at once and walking as nearly as possible in my old footsteps to where Northmou

awaited me beside the despatch box He was even paler than when I had left him and his voice shook a little

Could you see what he was like? he asked

He kept his back turned I replied

Let us get into the house Frank I don't think I'm a coward but I can stand no more of this he whispered

All was still and sunshiny about the pavilion as we turned to re enter it even the gulls had flown in a wider circuit and were seen flickering along the beach and sand-hills and this loneliness terrified me more than a regiment under arms It was not until the door was barricaded that I could draw a full inspiration and relieve the weight that lay upon my bosom Northmour and I exchanged a steady glance and I suppose each made his own reflections on the white and startled aspect of the other

You were right I said All is over Shake hands, old man, for the last time

Yes' replied he I will shake hands for as sure as I am here I bear no malice But remember if by some impossible accident we should give the slip to these blackguards I'll take the upper hand of you by fair or foul

Oh, said I you weary me!

He seemed hurt and walked away in silence to the foot of the stairs, where he paused

You do not understand said he 'I am not a swindler and I guard myself that is all It may weary you or not Mr Cassilis I do not care a rush I speak for my own satisfaction and not for your amusement You had better go upstairs and court the girl for my part I stay here

And I stay with you I returned Do you think I would steal a march, even with your permission?

Frank he said smiling it's a pity you are an ass for you have the makings of a man I think I must be fey to day you cannot irritate me even when you try Do you know he continued softly I think we are the two most miserable men in England you and I we have got on to thirty without wife or child or so much as a shop to look after—poor pitiful lost devils both! And now we clash about a girl! As if there were not several millions in the United Kingdom! Ah Frank Frank the one who loses this throw be it you or me he has my pity! It were better for him—how does the Bible say?—that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he were cast into the depth of the sea Let us take a drink he concluded suddenly but without any levity of tone

I was touched by his words and consented He sat down on the table in the dining-room and held up the glass of sherry to his eyes

If you beat me Frank he said I shall take to drink What will you do, if it goes the other way?

God knows I returned

Well said he here is a toast in the meantime '*Italia irredenta!*'

The remainder of the day was passed in the same dreadful tedium and suspense I laid the table for dinner while Northmour and Clara prepared the

meal together in the kitchen I could hear their talk as I went to and fro and was surprised to find it ran all the time upon myself Northmour again brack eted us together and rallied Clara on a choice of husbands but he continued to speak of me with some feeling and uttered nothing to my prejuice unless he included himself in the condemnation This awakened a sense of gratitude in my heart which combined with the immediateness of our peril to fill my eyes with tears After all I thought—and perhaps the thought was laughably vain—we were here three very noble human beings to perish in defence of a thieving banker

Before we sat down to table, I looked forth from an upstairs window The day was beginning to decline the links were utterly deserted, the despatch box still lay untouched where we had left it hours before

Mr Huddlestone in a long yellow dressing gown took one end of the table Clara the other, while Northmour and I faced each other from the sides The lamp was brightly trimmed, the wine was good the viands although mostly cold, excellent of their sort We seemed to have agreed tacitly all reference to the impending catastrophe was carefully avoided and considering our tragic circumstances we made a merrier party than could have been expected From time to time it is true Northmour or I would rise from table and make a round of the defences, and, on each of these occasions Mr Huddle stone was recalled to a sense of his tragic predicament glanced up with ghastly eyes and bore for an instant on his countenance the stamp of terror But he hastened to empty his glass wiped his forehead with his handkerchief, and joined again in the conversation

I was astonished at the wit and information he displayed Mr Huddlestone's was certainly no ordinary character he had read and observed for himself, his gifts were sound and though I could never have learned to love the man, I began to understand his success in business and the great respect in which he had been held before his failure He had above all, the talent of society, and though I never heard him speak but on this one and most unfavourable occasion I set him down among the most brilliant conversationalists I ever met

He was relating with great gusto and seemingly no feeling of shame, the manœuvres of a scoundrelly commission merchant whom he had known and studied in his youth and we were all listening with an odd mixture of mirth and embarrassment when our little party was brought abruptly to an end in the most startling manner

A noise like that of a wet finger on the window pane interrupted Mr Huddlestone's tale and in an instant we were all four as white as paper, and sat tongue tied and motionless round the table

"A snail I said at last for I had heard that these animals make a noise some what similar in character

Snails be d—d' said Northmour Hush!"

The same sound was repeated twice at regular intervals, and then a formid able voice shouted through the shutters the Italian word "*Traditore!*"

Mr Huddlestone threw his head in the air his eyelids quivered next moment he fell insensible below the table Northmour and I had each run to the

armoury and seized a gun Clara was on her feet with her hand at her throat

So we stood waiting for we thought the hour of attack was certainly come, but second passed after second and all but the surf remained silent in the neighbourhood of the pavilion

‘Quick, said Northmour, upstairs with him before they come’

VIII

TELLS THE LAST OF THE TALL MAN

SOMEHOW OR OTHER by hook and crook, and between the three of us we got Huddlestone bundled upstairs and laid upon the bed in *My Uncle's Room*. During the whole process which was rough enough he gave no sign of consciousness and he remained as we had thrown him, without changing the position of a finger. His daughter opened his shirt and began to wet his head and bosom while Northmour and I ran to the window. The weather continued clear, the moon which was now about full, had risen and shed a very clear light upon the links yet, strain our eyes as we might, we could distinguish nothing moving. A few dark spots more or less, on the uneven expanse were not to be identified they might be crouching men they might be shadows, it was impossible to be sure.

“Thank God said Northmour ‘Aggie is not coming to night’

Aggie was the name of the old nurse he had not thought of her till now, but that he should think of her at all was a trait that surprised me in the man.

We were again reduced to waiting. Northmour went to the fireplace and spread his hands before the red embers as if he were cold. I followed him mechanically with my eyes and in so doing turned my back upon the window. At that moment a very faint report was audible from without and a ball shivered a pane of glass and buried itself in the shutter two inches from my head. I heard Clara scream and though I whipped instantly out of range and into a corner she was there so to speak, before me beseeching to know if I were hurt. I felt that I could stand to be shot at every day and all day long with such marks of solicitude for a reward, and I continued to reassure her, with the tenderest caresses and in complete forgetfulness of our situation, till the voice of Northmour recalled me to myself.

An air-gun he said. They wish to make no noise’

I put Clara aside and looked at him. He was standing with his back to the fire and his hands clasped behind him and I knew by the black look on his face that passion was boiling within. I had seen just such a look before he attacked me that March night in the adjoining chamber, and though I could make every allowance for his anger I confess I trembled for the consequences. He gazed straight before him but he could see us with the tail of his eye and his temper kept rising like a gale of wind. With regular battle awaiting us outside this prospect of an internece strife within the walls began to daunt me.

Suddenly as I was thus closely watching his expression and prepared against the worst I saw a change a flash a look of relief upon his face He took up the lamp which stood beside him on the table and turned to us with an air of some excitement

There is one point that we must know " said he "Are they going to butcher the lot of us or only Huddlestone? Did they take you for him or fire at you for your own *beaux yeux*?"

They took me for him for certain " I replied ' I am near as tall and my head is fair

I am going to make sure " returned Northmour and he stepped up to the window holding the lamp above his head and stood there quietly affronting death for half a minute

Clara sought to rush forward and pull him from the place of danger, but I had the pardonable selfishness to hold her back by force

Yes ' said Northmour, turning coolly from the window, it's only Huddlestone they want

Oh Mr Northmour!" cried Clara but found no more to add the temerity she had just witnessed seeming beyond the reach of words

He, on his part looked at me cocking his head with a fire of triumph in his eyes and I understood at once that he had thus hazarded his life merely to attract Clara's notice and depose me from my position as the hero of the hour He snapped his fingers

The fire is only beginning ' said he 'When they warm up to their work, they won't be so particular

A voice was now heard hailing us from the entrance From the window we could see the figure of a man in the moonlight he stood motionless his face uplifted to ours and a rag of something white on his extended arm and as we looked right down upon him though he was a good many yards distant on the links we could see the moonlight glitter on his eyes

He opened his lips again and spoke for some minutes on end in a key so loud that he might have been heard in every corner of the pavilion and as far away as the borders of the wood It was the same voice that had already shouted "*Traditore!*" through the shutters of the dining room this time it made a complete and clear statement If the traitor Oddlestone were given up all others should be spared if not no one should escape to tell the tale

Well, Huddlestone, what do you say to that?" asked Northmour turning to the bed

Up to that moment the banker had given no sign of life, and I at least had supposed him to be still lying in a faint, but he replied at once and in such tones as I have never heard elsewhere save from a delirious patient adjured and besought us not to desert him It was the most hideous and abject performance that my imagination can conceive

Enough cried Northmour and then he threw open the window leaned out into the night and in a tone of exultation and with a total forgetfulness of what was due to the presence of a lady poured out upon the ambassador

a string of the most abominable raillery both in English and Italian and bade him be gone where he had come from I believe that nothing so delighted Northmour at that moment as the thought that we must all infallibly perish before the night was out

Meantime the Italian put his flag of truce into his pocket and disappeared at a leisurely pace among the sand hills

They make honourable war said Northmour They are all gentlemen and soldiers For the credit of the thing I wish we could change sides—you and I, Frank and you too Missy my darling—and leave that being on the bed to some one else Tut! Don't look shocked! We are all going post to what they call eternity and may as well be above board while there's time As far as I'm concerned if I could first strangle Huddlestone and then get Clara in my arms, I could die with some pride and satisfaction And as it is by God I'll have a kiss!

Before I could do anything to interfere he had rudely embraced and repeatedly kissed the resisting girl Next moment I had pulled him away with fury, and flung him heavily against the wall He laughed loud and long and I feared his wits had given way under the strain for even in the best of days he had been a sparing and a quiet laugher

Now Frank said he, when his mirth was somewhat appeased it's your turn Here's my hand Good bye farewell! Then seeing me stand rigid and indignant and holding Clara to my side— Man! he broke out are you angry? Did you think we were going to die with all the airs and graces of society? I took a kiss I'm glad I had it and now you can take another if you like, and square accounts

I turned from him with a feeling of contempt which I did not seek to dissemble

As you please said he 'You've been a prig in life, a prig you'll die

And with that he sat down in a chair a rifle over his knee and amused himself with snapping the lock but I could see that his ebullition of light spirits (the only one I ever knew him to display) had already come to an end, and was succeeded by a sullen scowling humour

All this time our assailant might have been entering the house, and we been none the wiser, we had in truth almost forgotten the danger that so imminently overhung our days But just then Mr Huddlestone uttered a cry, and leaped from the bed

I asked him what was wrong

Fire! he cried They have set the house on fire!"

Northmour was on his feet in an instant and he and I ran through the door of communication with the study The room was illuminated by a red and angry light Almost at the moment of our entrance a tower of flame arose in front of the window and with a tingling report a pane fell inwards on the carpet They had set fire to the lean to outhouse where Northmour used to nurse his negatives

'Hot work,' said Northmour 'Let us try in your old room '

We ran thither in a breath threw up the casement and looked forth Along the whole back wall of the pavilion piles of fuel had been drenched with mineral oil for in spite of the morning's rain they all burned bravely The fire had taken a firm hold already on the outhouse which blazed higher and higher every moment the back door was in the centre of a red hot bonfire the eaves we could see as we looked upward were already smouldering, for the roof overhung and was supported by considerable beams of wood At the same time hot pungent and choking volumes of smoke began to fill the house There was not a human being to be seen to right or left

Ah well! said Northmour here's the end thank God

And we returned to *My Uncle's Room* Mr Huddlestone was putting on his boots still violently trembling but with an air of determination such as I had not hitherto observed Clara stood close by him with her cloak in both hands ready to throw about her shoulders and a strange look in her eyes, as if she were half hopeful half doubtful of her father

Well boys and girls said Northmour how about a sally? The oven is heating it is not good to stay here and be baked and for my part I want to come to my hands with them and be done

There is nothing else left I replied

And both Clara and Mr Huddlestone though with a very different intonation added Nothing

As we went downstairs the heat was excessive and the roaring of the fire filled our ears and we had scarce reached the passage before the stairs window fell in a branch of flame shot brandishing through the aperture and the interior of the pavilion became lit up with that dreadful and fluctuating glare At the same moment we heard the fall of something heavy and inelastic in the upper story The whole pavilion it was plain had gone alight like a box of matches and now not only flamed sky high to land and sea, but threatened with every moment to crumble and fall in about our ears

Northmour and I cocked our revolvers Mr Huddlestone who had already refused a firearm put us behind him with a manner of command

Let Clara open the door said he so if they fire a volley she will be protected And in the meantime stand behind me I am the scapegoat, my sins have found me out'

I heard him as I stood breathless by his shoulder with my pistol ready patterning off prayers in a tremulous rapid whisper and I confess horrid as the thought may seem I despised him for thinking of supplications in a moment so critical and thrilling In the meantime Clara who was dead white but still possessed her faculties had displaced the barricade from the front door Another moment and she had pulled it open Firelight and moonlight illuminated the links with confused and changeful lustre and far away against the sky we could see a long trail of glowing smoke

Mr Huddlestone filled for the moment with a strength greater than his own, struck Northmour and myself a back hander in the chest and while we were thus for the moment incapacitated from action lifting his arms above his head like one about to dive he ran straight forward out of the pavilion.

Here am I' he cried— Huddlestone! Kill me and spare the others!"

His sudden appearance daunted I suppose our hidden enemies for Northmour and I had time to recover to seize Clara between us one by each arm, and to rush forth to his assistance ere anything further had taken place But scarce had we passed the threshold when there came near a dozen reports and flashes from every direction among the hollows of the links Mr Huddlestone staggered uttered a weird and freezing cry, threw up his arms over his head, and fell backward on the turf

'Traditore! Traditore!' cried the invisible avengers

And just then a part of the roof of the pavilion fell in, so rapid was the progress of the fire A loud vague and horrible noise accompanied the collapse and a vast volume of flame went soaring up to heaven It must have been visible at that moment from twenty miles out at sea from the shore at Graden Wester and far inland from the peak of Graystiel the most eastern summit of the Caulder Hills Bernard Huddlestone although God knows what were his obsequies had a fine pyre at the moment of his death

IX

TELLS HOW NORTHMOUR CARRIED OUT HIS THREAT

I SHOULD have the greatest difficulty to tell you what followed next after this tragic circumstance It is all to me as I look back upon it, mixed strenuous and ineffectual like the struggles of a sleeper in a nightmare Clara I remember, uttered a broken sigh and would have fallen forward to earth had not Northmour and I supported her insensible body I do not think we were attacked I do not remember even to have seen an assailant, and I believe we deserted Mr Huddlestone without a glance I only remember running like a man in a panic now carrying Clara altogether in my own arms now sharing her weight with Northmour now scuffing confusedly for the possession of that dear burden Why we should have made for my camp in the Hemlock Den or how we reached it are points lost for ever to my recollection The first moment at which I became definitely sure Clara had been suffered to fall against the outside of my little tent Northmour and I were tumbling together on the ground and he with contained ferocity, was striking for my head with the butt of his revolver He had already twice wounded me on the scalp, and it is to the consequent loss of blood that I am tempted to attribute the sudden clearness of my mind

I caught him by the wrist

Northmour, I remember saying 'you can kill me afterwards Let us first attend to Clara

He was at that moment uppermost Scarcely had the words passed my lips when he had leaped to his feet and ran towards the tent and the next moment he was straining Clara to his heart and covering her unconscious hands and face with his caresses

Shame!' I cried 'Shame to you Northmour!
And giddy though I still was I struck him repeatedly upon the head and shoulders

He relinquished his grasp and faced me in the broken moonlight
I had you under and let you go said he and now you strike me!
Coward'

You are the coward' I retorted Did she wish your kisses while she was still sensible of what she wanted? Not she! And now she may be dying and you waste this precious time and abuse her helplessness Stand aside and let me help her

He confronted me for a moment white and menacing then suddenly he stepped aside

Help her then ' said he

I threw myself on my knees beside her and loosened as well as I was able her dress and corset, but while I was thus engaged a grasp descended on my shoulder

Keep your hands off her, ' said Northmour fiercely Do you think I have no blood in my veins?

Northmour I cried if you will neither help her yourself nor let me do so do you know that I shall have to kill you?

That is better! he cried Let her die also where's the harm? Step aside from that girl! and stand up to fight

"You will observe, said I half rising that I have not kissed her yet
'I dare you to he cried

I do not know what possessed me it was one of the things I am most ashamed of in my life though as my wife used to say, I knew that my kisses would be always welcome were she dead or living, down I fell again upon my knees, parted the hair from her forehead and, with the dearest respect laid my lips for a moment on that cold brow It was such a caress as a father might have given it was such a one as was not unbecoming from a man soon to die to a woman already dead

And now said I "I am at your service Mr Northmour

But I saw to my surprise that he had turned his back upon me

Do you hear? I asked

Yes said he I do If you wish to fight I am ready If not go on and save Clara All is one to me

I did not wait to be twice bidden but stooping again over Clara continued my efforts to revive her She still lay white and lifeless I began to fear that her sweet spirit had indeed fled beyond recall and horror and a sense of utter desolation seized upon my heart I called her by name with the most endearing inflections I chafed and beat her hands, now I laid her head low now supported it against my knee, but all seemed to be in vain, and the lids still lay heavy on her eyes

Northmour I said there is my hat For God's sake bring some water from the spring

Almost in a moment he was by my side with the water

"I have brought it in my own he said You do not grudge me the privilege?"

Northmour I was beginning to say, as I laved her head and breast, but he interrupted me savagely

Oh you hush up! he said The best thing you can do is to say nothing I had certainly no desire to talk my mind being swallowed up in concern for my dear love and her condition so I continued in silence to do my best towards her recovery and when the hat was empty returned it to him with one word—More He had perhaps, gone several times upon this errand when Clara reopened her eyes

Now said he since she is better you can spare me can you not? I wish you a good night Mr Cassilis

And with that he was gone among the thicket I made a fire for I had now no fear of the Italians who had even spared all the little possessions left in my encampment, and broken as she was by the excitement and the hideous catastrophe of the evening I managed in one way or another—by persuasion, encouragement warmth and such simple remedies as I could lay my hands on—to bring her back to some composure of mind and strength of body

Day had already come when a sharp *Hist!* sounded from the thicket I started from the ground but the voice of Northmour was heard adding in the most tranquil tones Come here Cassilis and alone I want to show you something

I consulted Clara with my eyes and receiving her tacit permission left her alone and clambered out of the den At some distance off I saw Northmour leaning against an elder and as soon as he perceived me he began walking seaward I had almost overtaken him as he reached the outskirts of the wood

Look said he, pausing

A couple of steps more brought me out of the foliage The light of the morning lay cold and clear over that well known scene The pavilion was but a blackened wreck the roof had fallen in one of the gables had fallen out and, far and near, the face of the links was cicatrised with little patches of burnt furze This smoke still went straight upwards in the windless air of the morning and a great pile of ardent cinders filled the bare walls of the house, like coals in an open grate Close by the islet a schooner yacht lay to, and a well manned boat was pulling vigorously for the shore

The Red Earl! I cried *The Red Earl* twelve hours too late!

Feel in your pocket Frank Are you armed? asked Northmour

I obeyed him and I think I must have become deadly pale My revolver had been taken from me

You see I have you in my power he continued I disarmed you last night while you were nursing Clara but this morning—here—take your pistol No thanks! he cried holding up his hand I do not like them that is the only way you can annoy me now

He began to walk forward across the links to meet the boat and I followed a step or two behind In front of the pavilion I paused to see where Mr Huddleston had fallen but there was no sign of him nor so much as a trace of blood.

Graden Floe said Northmour

He continued to advance till we had come to the head of the beach

No farther please said he Would you like to take her to Graden House?"

Thank you replied I I shall try to get her to the minister's at Graden Wester

The prow of the boat here grated on the beach and a sailor jumped ashore with a line in his hand

'Wait a minute, lads' cried Northmour and then lower and to my private ear You had better say nothing of all this to her he added

'On the contrary' I broke out she shall know everything that I can tell

You do not understand he returned with an air of great dignity It will be nothing to her, she expects it of me Good bye! he added, with a nod

I offered him my hand

'Excuse me said he It's small I know but I can't push things quite so far as that I don't wish any sentimental business, to sit by your hearth a white haired wanderer and all that Quite the contrary I hope to God I shall never again clap eyes on either one of you

'Well God bless you Northmour' I said heartily

'Oh yes he returned

He walked down the beach and the man who was ashore gave him an arm on board and then shoved off and leaped into the bows himself Northmour took the tiller the boat rose to the waves and the oars between the thole pins sounded crisp and measured in the morning air

They were not yet half-way to the *Red Earl*, and I was still watching their progress when the sun rose out of the sea

One word more, and my story is done Years after Northmour was killed fighting under the colours of Garibaldi for the liberation of the Tyrol

A LODGING FOR THE NIGHT

A STORY OF FRANCIS VILLON

IT WAS LATE in November 1465 The snow fell over Paris with rigorous relentless persistence sometimes the wind made a sally and scattered it in flying vortices, sometimes there was a lull and flake after flake descended out of the black night air silent circuitous interminable To poor people looking up under moist eyebrows, it seemed a wonder where it all came from Master Francis Villon had propounded an alternative that afternoon at a tavern window was it only Pagan Jupiter plucking geese upon Olympus? or were the holy angels moulting? He was only a poor Master of Arts he went on, and as the question somewhat touched upon divinity he durst not venture to conclude A silly old priest from Montargis who was among the company treated the young rascal to a bottle of wine in honour of the jest and the grimaces

with which it was accompanied and swore on his own white beard that he had been just such another irreverent dog when he was Villon's age

The air was raw and pointed but not far below freezing and the flakes were large damp and adhesive The whole city was sheeted up An army might have marched from end to end and not a footfall given the alarm If there were any belated birds in heaven they saw the island like a large white patch and the bridges like slim white spars on the black ground of the river High up overhead the snow settled among the tracery of the cathedral towers Many a niche was drifted full many a statue wore a long white bonnet on its grotesque or sainted head The gargoyles had been transformed into great false noses, drooping towards the point The crockets were like upright pillows swollen on one side In the intervals of the wind there was a dull sound of dripping about the precincts of the church

The cemetery of St John had taken its own share of the snow All the graves were decently covered tall white housetops stood around in grave array, worthy burghers were long ago in bed benightcapped like their domiciles, there was no light in all the neighbourhood but a little peep from a lamp that hung swinging in the church choir and tossed the shadows to and fro in time to its oscillations The clock was hard on ten when the patrol went by with halberts and a lantern beating their hands and they saw nothing suspicious about the cemetery of St John

Yet there was a small house backed up against the cemetery wall which was still awake and awake to evil purpose in that snoring district There was not much to betray it from without, only a stream of warm vapour from the chimney-top a patch where the snow melted on the roof and a few half-obliterated footprints at the door But within behind the shuttered windows Master Francis Villon the poet and some of the thievish crew with whom he consorted were keeping the night alive and passing round the bottle

A great pile of living embers diffused a strong and ruddy glow from the arched chimney Before this straddled Dom Nicolas the Picardy monk with his skirts picked up and his fat legs bared to the comfortable warmth His dilated shadow cut the room in half and the fire light only escaped on either side of his broad person and in a little pool between his outspread feet His face had the beery bruised appearance of the continual drinker's it was covered with a network of congested veins purple in ordinary circumstances but now pale violet for even with his back to the fire the cold pinched him on the other side His cowl had half fallen back, and made a strange excrescence on either side of his bull neck So he straddled grumbling and cut the room in half with the shadow of his portly frame

On the right Villon and Guy Tabary were huddled together over a scrap of parchment, Villon making a ballade which he was to call the *Ballade of Roast Fish* and Tabary spluttering admiration at his shoulder The poet was a rag of a man dark little and lean with hollow cheeks and thin black locks He carried his four and twenty years with feverish animation Greed had made folds about his eyes evil smiles had puckered his mouth The wolf and pig struggled together in his face It was an eloquent sharp ugly earthly

countenance His hands were small and prehensile with fingers knotted like a cord and they were continually flickering in front of him in violent and expressive pantomime As for Tabary a broad complacent admiring imbecility breathed from his squash nose and slobbering lips he had become a thief just as he might have become the most decent of burgesses by the imperious chance that rules the lives of human geese and human donkeys

At the monk's other hand Montigny and Thevenin Pensete played a game of chance About the first there clung some flavour of good birth and training as about a fallen angel something long lithe and courtly in the person some thing aquiline and darkling in the face Thevenin poor soul was in great feather he had done a good stroke of knavery that afternoon in the Faubourg St Jacques and all night he had been gaining from Montigny A flat smile illuminated his face, his bald head shone rosily in a garland of red curls his little protuberant stomach shook with silent chucklings as he swept in his gains

Doubles or quits?' said Thevenin

Montigny nodded grimly

"Some may prefer to dine in state," wrote Villon '*On bread and cheese on silver plate* Or—or-help me out, Guido'

Tabary giggled

"Or parsley on a golden dish," scribbled the poet

The wind was freshening without it drove the snow before it and sometimes raised its voice in a victorious whoop and made sepulchral grumblings in the chimney The cold was growing sharper as the night went on Villon protruding his lips imitated the gust with something between a whistle and a groan It was an eerie, uncomfortable talent of the poet's much detested by the Picardy monk

Can't you hear it rattle in the gibbet?' said Villon They are all dancing the devil's jig on nothing up there You may dance my gallants you'll be none the warmer! Whew! what a gust! Down went somebody just now! A medlar the fewer on the three-legged medlar tree!—I say Dom Nicolas it'll be cold to night on the St Denis Road?' he asked

Dom Nicolas winked both his big eyes and seemed to choke upon his Adam's apple Montfaucon the great grisly Paris gibbet stood hard by the St Denis Road and the pleasantry touched him on the raw As for Tabary he laughed immoderately over the medlars he had never heard anything more light hearted, and he held his sides and crowed Villon fetched him a fillip on the nose which turned his mirth into an attack of coughing

Oh stop that row,' said Villon and think of rhymes to fish

Doubles or quits said Montigny doggedly

'With all my heart quoth Thevenin

'Is there any more in that bottle?' asked the monk

Open another, said Villon How do you ever hope to fill that big hogs head your body with little things like bottles? And how do you expect to get to heaven? How many angels do you fancy can be spared to carry up a single monk from Picardy? Or do you think yourself another Elias—and they'll send the coach for you?

"Hominibus impossibile," replied the monk as he filled the glass

Tabary was in ecstasies

Villon filliped his nose again

Laugh at my jokes if you like ' he said

It was very good, ' objected Tabary

Villon made a face at him Think of rhymes to 'fish,' ' he said "What have you to do with Latin? You ll wish you knew none of it at the great assizes when the devil calls for Guido Tabary clericus—the devil with the hump back and red hot finger nails Talking of the devil, he added in a whisper, look a Montigny'

All three peered covertly at the gamester He did not seem to be enjoying his luck His mouth was a little to a side, one nostril nearly shut, and the other much inflated The black dog was on his back as people say in terrifying nursery metaphor and he breathed hard under the gruesome burden

He looks as if he could knife him' whispered Tabary, with round eyes

The monk shuddered and turned his face and spread his open hands to the red embers It was the cold that thus affected Dom Nicolas, and not any excess of moral sensibility

'Come now said Villon—"about this ballade How does it run so far?" And beating time with his hands he read it aloud to Tabary

They were interrupted at the fourth rhyme by a brief and fatal movement among the gamesters The round was completed and Thevenin was just opening his mouth to claim another victory, when Montigny leaped up, swift as an adder and stabbed him to the heart The blow took effect before he had time to utter a cry before he had time to move A tremor or two convulsed his frame his hands opened and shut, his heels rattled on the floor, then his head rolled backward over one shoulder with the eyes wide open, and Thevenin Pensete's spirit had returned to Him who made it.

Every one sprang to his feet, but the business was over in two twos The four living fellows looked at each other in rather a ghastly fashion, the dead man contemplating a corner of the roof with a singular and ugly leer

'My God!' said Tabary, and he began to pray in Latin

Villon broke out into hysterical laughter He came a step forward and ducked a ridiculous bow at Thevenin, and laugh'd still louder Then he sat down suddenly all of a heap upon a stool, and continued laughing bitterly as though he would shake himself to pieces

Montigny recovered his composure first

"Let's see what he has about him,' he remarked, and he picked the dead man's pockets with a practised hand and divided the money into four equal portions on the table There's for you he said

The monk received his share with a deep sigh and a single stealthy glance at the dead Thevenin, who was beginning to sink into himself and topple sideways off the chair

'We're all in for it' cried Villon, swallowing his mirth 'It's a hanging job for every man jack of us that's here—not to speak of those who aren't' He made a shocking gesture in the air with his raised right hand, and put out his

tongue and threw his head on one side so as to counterfeit the appearance of one who has been hanged Then he pocketed his share of the spoil, and executed a shuffle with his feet as if to restore the circulation

Tabary was the last to help himself he made a dash at the money, and retired to the other end of the apartment

Montigny stuck Thevenin upright in the chair and drew out the dagger, which was followed by a jet of blood

You fellows had better be moving he said, as he wiped the blade on his victim's doublet

I think we had ' returned Villon with a gulp Damn his fat head! ' he broke out It sticks in my throat like phlegm What right has a man to have red hair when he is dead? And he fell all a heap again upon the stool, and fairly covered his face with his hands

Montigny and Dom Nicolas laughed aloud, even Tabary feebly chuming in.

Cry baby, said the monk

I always said he was a woman, added Montigny with a sneer Sit up can't you? he went on, giving another shake to the murdered body 'Tread out that fire, Nick!'

But Nick was better employed he was quietly taking Villon's purse as the poet sat, limp and trembling on the stool where he had been making a ballade not three minutes before Montigny and Tabary dumbly demanded a share of the booty, which the monk silently promised as he passed the little bag into the bosom of his gown In many ways an artistic nature unfits a man for practical existence

No sooner had the theft been accomplished than Villon shook himself jumped to his feet and began helping to scatter and extinguish the embers Meanwhile Montigny opened the door and cautiously peered into the street The coast was clear, there was no meddlesome patrol in sight Still it was judged wiser to slip out severally and as Villon was himself in a hurry to escape from the neighbourhood of the dead Thevenin and the rest were in a still greater hurry to get rid of him before he should discover the loss of his monev he was the first by general consent to issue forth into the street

The wind had triumphed and swept all the clouds from heaven Only a few vapours, as thin as moonlight fleeting rapidly across the stars It was bitter cold, and by a common optical effect things seemed almost more definite than in the broadest daylight The sleeping city was absolutely still a company of white hoods, a field full of little Alps below the twinkling stars Villon cursed his fortune Would it were still snowing! Now wherever he went he left an indelible trail behind him on the glittering streets, wherever he went he was still tethered to the house by the cemetery of St John wherever he went he must weave, with his own plodding feet the rope that bound him to the crime and would bind him to the gallows The leer of the dead man came back to him with a new significance He snapped his fingers as if to pluck up his own spirits, and choosing a street at random, stepped boldly forward in the snow

Two things preoccupied him as he went the aspect of the gallows at

Montfaucon in this bright windy phase of the night's existence, for one, and for another the look of the dead man with his bald head and garland of red curls Both struck cold upon his heart and he kept quickening his pace as if he could escape from unpleasant thoughts by mere fleetness of foot Sometimes he looked back over his shoulder with a sudden nervous jerk, but he was the only moving thing in the white streets except when the wind swooped round a corner and threw up the snow, which was beginning to freeze, in spouts of glittering dust

Suddenly he saw a long way before him a black clump and a couple of lanterns The clump was in motion and the lanterns swung as though carried by men walking It was a patrol And though it was merely crossing his line of march he judged it wiser to get out of eyeshot as speedily as he could He was not in the humour to be challenged, and he was conscious of making a very conspicuous mark upon the snow Just on his left hand there stood a great hotel, with some turrets and a large porch before the door, it was half ruinous he remembered and had long stood empty and so he made three steps of it and jumped into the shelter of the porch It was pretty dark inside after the glimmer of the snowy streets and he was groping forward with outspread hands when he stumbled over some substance which offered an indescribable mixture of resistance hard and soft firm and loose His heart gave a leap and he sprang two steps back and stared dreadfully at the obstacle Then he gave a little laugh of relief It was only a woman and she dead He knelt beside her to make sure upon this latter point She was freezing cold, and rigid like a stick A little ragged finery fluttered in the wind about her hair and her cheeks had been heavily rouged that same afternoon Her pockets were quite empty, but in her stocking underneath the garter Villon found two of the small coins that went by the name of whites It was little enough, but it was always something, and the poet was moved with a deep sense of pathos that she should have died before she had spent her money That seemed to him a dark and pitiable mystery and he looked from the coins in his hand to the dead woman and back again to the coins, shaking his head over the riddle of man's life Henry V of England dying at Vincennes just after he had conquered France and this poor jade cut off by a cold draught in a great man's doorway before she had time to spend her couple of whites—it seemed a cruel way to carry on the world Two whites would have taken such a little while to squander and yet it would have been one more good taste in the mouth, one more smack of the lips before the devil got the soul, and the body was left to birds and vermin He would like to use all his tallow before the light was blown out and the lantern broken

While these thoughts were passing through his mind, he was feeling, half mechanically for his purse Suddenly his heart stopped beating a feeling of cold scales passed up the back of his legs and a cold blow seemed to fall upon his scalp He stood petrified for a moment then he felt again with one feverish movement and then his loss burst upon him and he was covered at once with perspiration To spendthrifts money is so living and actual—it is such a thin veil between them and their pleasures! There is only one limit to their

fortune—that of time, and a spendthrift with only a few crowns is the Emperor of Rome until they are spent. For such a person to lose his money is to suffer the most shocking reverse and fall from heaven to hell from all to nothing in a breath. And all the more if he has put his head in the halter for it if he may be hanged to-morrow for that same purse so dearly earned so foolishly departed! Villon stood and cursed he threw the two whites into the street, he shook his fist at heaven, he stamped and was not horrified to find himself trampling the poor corpse. Then he began rapidly to retrace his steps towards the house beside the cemetery. He had forgotten all fear of the patrol which was long gone by at any rate and had no idea but that of his lost purse. It was in vain that he looked right and left upon the snow nothing was to be seen. He had not dropped it in the streets. Had it fallen in the house? He would have liked dearly to go in and see but the idea of the grisly occupant unmanned him. And he saw besides as he drew near that their efforts to put out the fire had been unsuccessful on the contrary it had broken into a blaze and a changeful light played in the chinks of door and window and revived his terror for the authorities and Paris gibbet.

He returned to the hotel with the porch and groped about upon the snow for the money he had thrown away in his childish passion. But he could only find one white the other had probably struck sideways and sunk deeply in. With a single white in his pocket all his projects for a rousing night in some wild tavern vanished utterly away. And it was not only pleasure that fled laughing from his grasp positive discomfort positive pain attacked him as he stood ruefully before the porch. His perspiration had dried upon him and though the wind had now fallen a binding frost was setting in stronger with every hour and he felt benumbed and sick at heart. What was to be done? Late as was the hour improbable as was success he would try the house of his adopted father the chaplain of St. Benoit.

He ran there all the way and knocked timidly. There was no answer. He knocked again and again taking heart with every stroke and at last steps were heard approaching from within. A barred wicket fell open in the iron studded door and emitted a gush of yellow light.

‘Hold up your face to the wicket’ said the chaplain from within.

‘It’s only me’ whimpered Villon.

‘Oh it’s only you is it?’ returned the chaplain and he cursed him with foul unpriestly oaths for disturbing him at such an hour and made him be off to hell where he came from.

‘My hands are blue to the wrist’ pleaded Villon my feet are dead and full of twinges my nose aches with the sharp air the cold lies at my heart I may be dead before morning Only this once father and before God I will never ask again!

‘You should have come earlier’ said the ecclesiastic coolly. Young men require a lesson now and then. He shut the wicket and retired deliberately into the interior of the house.

Villon was beside himself, he beat upon the door with his hands and feet and shouted hoarsely after the chaplain

"Wormy old fox!" he cried. If I had my hand under your twist I would send you flying headlong into the bottomless pit.

A door shut in the interior faintly audible to the poet down long passages. He passed his hand over his mouth with an oath. And then the humour of the situation struck him and he laughed and looked lightly up to heaven, where the stars seemed to be winking over his discomfiture.

What was to be done? It looked very like a night in the frosty streets. The idea of the dead woman popped into his imagination and gave him a hearty fright, what had happened to her in the early night might very well happen to him before morning. And he so young! and with such immense possibilities of disorderly amusement before him! He felt quite pathetic over the notion of his own fate as if it had been some one else's and made a little imaginative vignette of the scene in the morning when they should find his body.

He passed all his chances under review turning the white between his thumb and forefinger. Unfortunately he was on bad terms with some old friends who would once have taken pity on him in such a plight. He had lampooned them in verses he had beaten and cheated them and yet now when he was in so close a pinch he thought there was at least one who might perhaps relent. It was a chance. It was worth trying at least, and he would go and see.

On the way two little accidents happened to him which coloured his musings in a very different manner. For first he fell in with the track of a patrol and walked in it for some hundred yards although it lay out of his direction. And this spirited him up at least he had confused his trail for he was still possessed with the idea of people tracking him all about Paris over the snow and collaring him next morning before he was awake. The other matter affected him very differently. He passed a street corner, where not so long before a woman and her child had been devoured by wolves. This was just the kind of weather he reflected when wolves might take it into their heads to enter Paris again and a lone man in these deserted streets would run the chance of something worse than a mere scare. He stopped and looked upon the place with an unpleasant interest—it was a centre where several lanes intersected each other and he looked down them all one after another and held his breath to listen lest he should detect some galloping black things on the snow or hear the sound of howling between him and the river. He remembered his mother telling him the story and pointing out the spot while he was yet a child. His mother! If he only knew where she lived, he might make sure at least of shelter. He determined he would inquire upon the morrow, nay he would go and see her too poor old girl! So thinking he arrived at his destination—his last hope for the night.

The house was quite dark like its neighbours, and yet after a few taps he heard a movement overhead a door opening and a cautious voice asking who was there. The poet named himself in a loud whisper and waited not without some trepidation the result. Nor had he to wait long. A window was suddenly opened and a pailful of slops splashed down upon the doorstep. Vil lon had not been unprepared for something of the sort, and had put himself

as much in shelter as the nature of the porch admitted but after all that he was deplorably drenched below the waist His hose began to freeze almost at once Death from cold and exposure stared him in the face he remembered he was of phthisical tendency and began coughing tentatively But the gravity of the danger steadied his nerves He stopped a few hundred yards from the door where he had been so rudely used and reflected with his finger to his nose He could only see one way of getting lodgings and that was to take it He had noticed a house not far away which looked as if it might be easily broken into and thither he betook himself promptly entertaining himself on the way with the idea of a room still hot with a table still loaded with the remains of supper where he might pass the rest of the black hours and whence he should issue on the morrow with an armful of valuable plate He even considered on what viands and what wines he should prefer and as he was calling the roll of his favourite dainties roast fish presented itself to his mind with an odd mixture of amusement and horror

I shall never finish that ballade he thought to himself and then with an other shudder at the recollection Oh damn his fat head! he repeated fervently and spat upon the snow

The house in question looked dark at first sight but as Villon made a preliminary inspection in search of the handiest point of attack a little twinkle of light caught his eye from behind a curtained window

The devil! he thought People awake! Some student or some saint confound the crew! Can't they get drunk and lie in bed snoring like their neighbours? What's the good of curfew and poor devils of bell ringers jumping at a rope's end in bell towers? What's the use of day if people sit up all night? The gripes to them! He grinned as he saw where his logic was leading him Every man to his business after all added he and if they're awake by the Lord, I may come by a supper honestly for this once and cheat the devil

He went boldly to the door and knocked with an assured hand On both previous occasions he had knocked timidly with some dread of attracting notice but now when he had just discarded the thought of a burglarious entry knocking at a door seemed a mighty simple and innocent proceeding The sound of his blows echoed through the house with thin phantasmal reverberations as though it were quite empty but these had scarcely died away before a measured tread drew near a couple of bolts were withdrawn and one wing was opened broadly as though no guile or fear of guile were known to those within A tall figure of a man muscular and spare but a little bent, confronted Villon The head was massive in bulk, but finely sculptured the nose blunt at the bottom but refining upward to where it joined a pair of strong and honest eyebrows, the mouth and eyes surrounded with delicate markings and the whole face based upon a thick white beard boldly and squarely trimmed Seen as it was by the light of a flickering hand lamp it looked perhaps nobler than it had a right to do but it was a fine face honourable rather than intelligent strong simple and righteous

You knock late sir said the old man in resonant courteous tones

Villon cringed and brought up many servile words of apology, at a crisis of this sort, the beggar was uppermost in him, and the man of genius hid his head with confusion

'You are cold' repeated the old man 'and hungry? Well step in.' And he ordered him into the house with a noble enough gesture

Some great seigneur thought Villon, as his host setting down the lamp on the flagged pavement of the entry shot the bolts once more into their places

'You will pardon me if I go in front,' he said when this was done, and he preceded the poet upstairs into a large apartment warmed with a pan of charcoal and lit by a great lamp hanging from the roof. It was very bare of furniture, only some gold plate on a sideboard, some folios and a stand of armour between the windows. Some smart tapestry hung upon the walls representing the crucifixion of our Lord in one piece and in another a scene of shepherds and shepherdesses by a running stream. Over the chimney was a shield of arms.

'Will you seat yourself' said the old man 'and forgive me if I leave you? I am alone in my house to night and if you are to eat I must forage for you myself.'

No sooner was his host gone than Villon leaped from the chair on which he had just seated himself and began examining the room with the stealth and passion of a cat. He weighed the gold flagons in his hand, opened all the folios and investigated the arms upon the shield and the stuff with which the seats were lined. He raised the window curtains and saw that the windows were set with rich stained glass in figures so far as he could see of martial import. Then he stood in the middle of the room, drew a long breath and retaining it with puffed cheeks looked round and round him turning on his heels as if to impress every feature of the apartment on his memory.

'Seven pieces of plate' he said 'If there had been ten, I would have risked it. A fine house and a fine old master so help me all the saints!'

And just then hearing the old man's tread returning along the corridor he stole back to his chair and began humbly toasting his wet legs before the charcoal pan.

His entertainer had a plate of meat in one hand and a jug of wine in the other. He set down the plate upon the table motioning Villon to draw in his chair and going to the sideboard brought back two goblets which he filled.

'I drink to your better fortune' he said, gravely touching Villon's cup with his own.

'To our better acquaintance' said the poet, growing bold. A mere man of the people would have been awed by the courtesy of the old seigneur but Villon was hardened in that matter. He had made mirth for great lords before now and found them as black rascals as himself. And so he devoted himself to the viands with a ravenous gusto while the old man leaning backwards, watched him with steady curious eyes.

'You have blood on your shoulder my man' he said.

Montigny must have laid his wet hand upon him as he left the house. He cursed Montigny in his heart.

'It was none of my shedding he stammered
 I had not supposed so returned his host quietly A brawl?
 Well something of that sort Villon admitted with a quaver
 Perhaps a fellow murdered?

Oh no not murdered said the poet more and more confused It was all
 fair play—murdered by accident I had no hand in it God strike me dead! he
 added fervently

One rogue the fewer I dare say' observed the master of the house
 'You may dare to say that agreed Villon infinitely relieved As big a
 rogue as there is between here and Jerusalem He turned up his toes like a
 lamb But it was a nasty thing to look at I dare say you've seen dead men in
 your time my lord' he added glancing at the armour

'Many said the old man I have followed the wars as you imagine"
 Villon laid down his knife and fork which he had just taken up again
 Were any of them bald? he asked

"Oh yes, and with hair as white as mine"

'I don't think I should mind the white so much said Villon 'His was
 red' And he had a return of his shuddering and tendency to laughter which
 he drowned with a great draught of wine I'm a little put out when I think
 of it' he went on I knew him—damn him! And then the cold gives a man
 fancies—or the fancies give a man cold I don't know which

Have you any money' asked the old man

I have one white returned the poet laughing I got it out of a dead jade's
 stocking in a porch She was as dead as Cæsar poor wench and as cold as a
 church with bits of ribbon sticking in her hair This is a hard world in winter
 for wolves and wenches and poor rogues like me

I said the old man am Enguerrand de la Fecuilee seigneur de Brisetout
 bally du Patatrac Who and what may you be?

Villon rose and made a suitable reverence I am called Francis Villon' he
 said a poor Master of Arts of this university I know some Latin and a great
 deal of vice I can make chansons, ballades lais virelais and roundels and I
 am very fond of wine I was born in a garret and I shall not improbably die
 upon the gallows I may add my lord that from this night forward I am your
 lordship's very obsequious servant to command

No servant of mine, said the knight my guest for this evening and no
 more

A very grateful guest said Villon politely, and he drank in dumb show
 to his entertainer

You are shrewd, began the old man tapping his forehead very shrewd,
 you have learning, you are a clerk and yet you take a small piece of money
 off a dead woman in the street Is it not a kind of theft?

It is a kind of theft much practised in the wars my lord

The wars are the field of honour returned the old man proudly There
 a man plays his life upon the cast he fights in the name of his lord the king
 his Lord God and all their lordships the holy saints and angels

"Put it," said Villon "that I were really a thief, should I not play my life also, and against heavier odds?"

'For gain, but not for honour'

'Gain?' repeated Villon with a shrug "Gain! The poor fellow wants supper, and takes it. So does the soldier in a campaign. Why, what are all these requisitions we hear so much about? If they are not gain to those who take them, they are loss enough to the others. The men at-arms drink by a good fire, while the burgher bites his nails to buy them wine and wood. I have seen a good many ploughmen swinging on trees about the country, ay, I have seen thirty on one elm and a very poor figure they made. And when I asked some one how all these came to be hanged I was told it was because they could not scrape together enough crowns to satisfy the men at-arms.

"These things are a necessity of war, which the low-born must endure with constancy. It is true that some captains drive over hard, there are spirits in every rank not easily moved by pity, and indeed many follow arms who are no better than brigands.

"You see said the poet, 'you cannot separate the soldier from the brigand, and what is a thief but an isolated brigand with circumspect manners? I steal a couple of mutton chops, without so much as disturbing people's sleep, the farmer grumbles a bit but sups none the less wholesomely on what remains. You come up blowing gloriously on a trumpet, take away the whole sheep and beat the farmer pitifully into the bargain. I have no trumpet, I am only Tom, Dick, or Harry, I am a rogue and a dog and hanging's too good for me—with all my heart, but just you ask the farmer which of us he prefers, just find out which of us he lies awake to curse on cold nights.'

"Look at us two," said his lordship "I am old, strong, and honoured. If I were turned from my house to-morrow, hundreds would be proud to shelter me. Poor people would go out and pass the night in the streets with their children, if I merely hinted that I wished to be alone. And I find you up, wandering homeless and picking farthings off dead women by the wayside! I fear no man and nothing, I have seen you tremble and lose countenance at a word. I wait God's summons contentedly in my own house, or, if it please the king to call me out again, upon the field of battle. You look for the gallows, a rough, swift death without hope or honour. Is there no difference between these two?"

"As far as to the moon" Villon acquiesced. But if I had been born lord of Brisetout and you had been the poor scholar Francis, would the difference have been any the less? Should not I have been warming my knees at this charcoal pan and would not you have been groping for farthings in the snow? Should not I have been the soldier and you the thief?"

A thief!" cried the old man. "I a thief! If you understood your words, you would repent them."

Villon turned out his hands with a gesture of inimitable impudence "If your lordship had done me the honour to follow my argument!" he said.

'I do you too much honour in submitting to your presence,' said the knight. 'Learn to curb your tongue when you speak with old and honourable

men or some one hastier than I may reprove you in a sharper fashion. And he rose and paced the lower end of the apartment struggling with anger and antipathy. Villon surreptitiously refilled his cup and settled himself more comfortably in the chair crossing his knees and leaning his head upon one hand and the elbow against the back of the chair. He was now replete and warm and he was in nowise frightened for his host having gauged him as justly as was possible between two such different characters. The night was far spent, and in a very comfortable fashion after all, and he felt morally certain of a safe departure on the morrow.

'Tell me one thing,' said the old man pausing in his walk. 'Are you really a thief?'

'I claim the sacred rights of hospitality,' returned the poet. 'My lord, I am'

You are very young,' the knight continued.

I should never have been so old,' replied Villon showing his fingers if I had not helped myself with these ten talents. They have been my nursing mothers and my nursing fathers.

'You may still repent and change.'

'I repent daily,' said the poet. 'There are few people more given to repentance than poor Francis. As for change let somebody change my circumstances. A man must continue to eat if it were only that he may continue to repent.'

"The change must begin in the heart," returned the old man solemnly.

My dear lord,' answered Villon, 'do you really fancy that I steal for pleasure? I hate stealing like any other piece of work or of danger. My teeth chatter when I see a gallows. But I must eat, I must drink, I must mix in society of some sort. What the devil! Man is not a solitary animal—*Cui Deus feminam tradit*. Make me king's pantler—make me abbot of St Denis—make me baily of the Patarac and then I shall be changed indeed. But as long as you leave me the poor scholar Francis Villon without a farthing why of course I remain the same.'

The grace of God is all powerful.'

'I should be a heretic to question it,' said Francis. 'It has made you lord of Brisetout and baily of the Patarac. It has given me nothing but the wits under my hat and these ten toes upon my hands. May I help myself to wine? I thank you respectfully. By God's grace you have a very superior vintage.'

The lord of Brisetout walked to and fro with his hands behind his back. Perhaps he was not yet quite settled in his mind about the parallel between thieves and soldiers, perhaps Villon had interested him by some cross thread of sympathy, perhaps his wits were simply muddled by so much unfamiliar reasoning, but whatever the cause he somehow yearned to convert the young man to a better way of thinking, and could not make up his mind to drive him forth again into the street.

'There is something more than I can understand in this,' he said at length. 'Your mouth is full of subtleties and the devil has led you very far astray, but the devil is only a very weak spirit before God's truth and all his subtleties vanish at a word of true honour, like darkness at morning. Listen to me'

once more I learned long ago that a gentleman should live chivalrously and lovingly to God and the king and his lady, and though I have seen many strange things done I have still striven to command my ways upon that rule It is not only written in all noble histories but in every man's heart if he will take care to read You speak of food and wine and I know very well that hunger is a difficult trial to endure, but you do not speak of other wants, you say nothing of honour of faith to God and other men of courtesy of love without reproach It may be that I am not very wise—and yet I think I am—but you seem to me like one who has lost his way and made a great error in life You are attending to the little wants and you have totally forgotten the great and only real ones like a man who should be doctoring a toothache on the Judgment Day For such things as honour and love and faith are not only nobler than food and drink but indeed I think that we desire them more, and suffer more sharply for their absence I speak to you as I think you will most easily understand me Are you not, while careful to fill your belly dis regarding another appetite in your heart, which spoils the pleasure of your life and keeps you continually wretched?

Villon was sensibly nettled under all this sermonising You think I have no sense of honour! he cried I'm poor enough God knows! It's hard to see rich people with their gloves and you blowing in your hands An empty belly is a bitter thing although you speak so lightly of it If you had had as many as I, perhaps you would change your tune Any way I'm a thief—make the most of that—but I'm not a devil from hell God strike me dead I would have you to know I've an honour of my own as good as yours though I don't prate about it all day long as if it was a God's miracle to have any It seems quite natural to me I keep it in its box till it's wanted Why now look you here, how long have I been in this room with you? Did you not tell me you were alone in the house? Look at your gold plate! You're strong if you like but you're old and unarmed, and I have my knife What did I want but a jerk of the elbow and here would have been you with the cold steel in your bowels, and there would have been me linking in the streets with an armful of gold cups! Did you suppose I hadn't wit enough to see that? And I scorned the action There are your damned goblets as safe as in a church there are you, with your heart ticking as good as new, and here am I, ready to go out again as poor as I came in with my one white that you threw in my teeth! And you think I have no sense of honour—God strike me dead!"

The old man stretched out his right arm I will tell you what you are he said You are a rogue my man an impudent and a black-hearted rogue and vagabond I have passed an hour with you Oh! believe me I feel myself disgraced! And you have eaten and drunk at my table But now I am sick at your presence, the day has come, and the night bird should be off to his roost Will you go before or after?

"Which you please returned the poet rising I believe you to be strictly honourable He thoughtfully emptied his cup I wish I could add you were intelligent he went on knocking on his head with his knuckles Age, age! the brains stiff and rheumatic

The old man preceded him from a point of self-respect, Villon followed whistling with his thumbs in his girdle

'God pity you said the lord of Brisetout at the door

Good bye papa," returned Villon with a yawn Many thanks for the cold mutton

The door closed behind him The dawn was breaking over the white roofs A chill uncomfortable morning ushered in the day Villon stood and heartily stretched himself in the middle of the road

A very dull old gentleman he thought I wonder what his goblets may be worth'

THE SIRE DE MALETROIT'S DOOR

DENIS DE BEAULIEU was not yet two and twenty, but he counted himself a grown man and a very accomplished cavalier into the bargain Lads were early formed in that rough warfaring epoch and when one has been in a pitched battle and a dozen raids has killed one's man in an honourable fashion and knows a thing or two of strategy and mankind a certain swagger in the gait is surely to be pardoned He had put up his horse with due care and supped with due deliberation and then in a very agreeable frame of mind, went out to pay a visit in the grey of the evening It was not a very wise proceeding on the young man's part He would have done better to remain beside the fire or go decently to bed For the town was full of the troops of Burgundy and England under a mixed command, and though Denis was there on safe conduct, his safe-conduct was like to serve him little on a chance encounter

It was September 1429, the weather had fallen sharp a flighty piping wind, laden with showers beat about the township and the dead leaves ran riot along the streets Here and there a window was already lighted up, and the noise of men-at-arms making merry over supper within came forth in fits and was swallowed up and carried away by the wind The night fell swiftly the flag of England fluttering on the spire-top grew ever fainter and fainter against the flying clouds—a black speck like a swallow in the tumultuous, leaden chaos of the sky As the night fell the wind rose and began to hoot under archways and roar amid the tree tops in the valley below the town

Denis de Beaulieu walked fast and was soon knocking at his friend's door but though he promised himself to stay only a little while and make an early return his welcome was so pleasant and he found so much to delay him, that it was already long past midnight before he said good bye upon the threshold The wind had fallen again in the meanwhile the night was as black as the grave not a star nor a glimmer of moonshine slipped through the canopy of cloud Denis was ill acquainted with the intricate lanes of Chateau Landon, even by daylight he had found some trouble in picking his way and in this absolute darkness he soon lost it altogether He was certain of one thing only—to keep mounting the hill for his friend's house lay at the lower end, or tail

of Chateau Landon while the inn was up at the head under the great church spire With this clue to go upon he stumbled and groped forward now breathing more freely in open places where there was a good slice of sky overhead now feeling along the wall in stifling closeness It is an eerie and mysterious position to be thus submerged in opaque blackness in an almost unknown town The silence is terrifying in its possibilities The touch of cold window bars to the exploring hand startles the man like the touch of a toad the inequalities of the pavement shake his heart into his mouth, a piece of denser darkness threatens an ambuscade or a chasm in the pathway, and where the air is brighter the houses put on strange and bewildering appearances as if to lead him farther from his way For Denis who had to regain his inn without attracting notice there was real danger as well as mere discomfort in the walk and he went warily and boldly at once, and at every corner paused to make an observation

He had been for some time threading a lane so narrow that he could touch a wall with either hand when it began to open out and go sharply downward Plainly this lay no longer in the direction of his inn but the hope of a little more light tempted him forward to reconnoitre The lane ended in a terrace with a bartizan wall which gave an outlook between high houses as out of an embrasure into the valley lying dark and formless several hundred feet below Denis looked down and could discern a few tree tops waving and a single speck of brightness where the river ran across a weir The weather was clearing up and the sky had lightened so as to show the outline of the heavier clouds and the dark margin of the hills By the uncertain glimmer the house on his left hand should be a place of some pretensions it was surmounted by several pinnacles and turret tops the round stern of a chapel with a fringe of flying buttresses projected boldly from the main block and the door was sheltered under a deep porch carved with figures and overhung by two long gargoyle The windows of the chapel gleamed through their intricate tracery with a light as of many tapers and threw out the buttresses and the peaked roof in a more intense blackness against the sky It was plainly the hotel of some great family of the neighbourhood and as it reminded Denis of a town house of his own at Bourges he stood for some time gazing up at it and mentally gauging the skill of the architects and the consideration of the two families

There seemed to be no issue to the terrace but the lane by which he had reached it he could only retrace his steps but he had gained some notion of his whereabouts and hoped by this means to hit the main thoroughfare and speedily regain the inn He was reckoning without that chapter of accidents which was to make this night memorable above all others in his career for he had not gone back above a hundred yards before he saw a light coming to meet him and heard loud voices speaking together in the echoing narrows of the lane It was a party of men at arms going the night round with torches Denis assured himself that they had all been making free with the wine-bowl and were in no mood to be particular about safe conducts or the niceties of chivalrous war It was as like as not that they would kill him like a dog and 'eave him where he fell The situation was inspiring but nervous Their own

torches would conceal him from sight he reflected and he hoped that they would drown the noise of his footsteps with their own empty voices If he were but fleet and silent he might evade their notice altogether

Unfortunately as he turned to beat a retreat his foot rolled upon a pebble, he fell against the wall with an ejaculation and his sword rang loudly on the stones Two or three voices demanded who went there—some in French some in English but Denis made no reply and ran the faster down the lane Once upon the terrace he paused to look back They still kept calling after him, and just then began to double the pace in pursuit with a considerable clank of armour and great tossing of the torchlight to and fro in the narrow jaws of the passage

Denis cast a look around and darted into the porch There he might escape observation or—if that were too much to expect—was in a capital posture whether for parley or defence So thinking he drew his sword and tried to set his back against the door To his surprise it yielded behind his weight and though he turned in a moment continued to swing back on oiled and noise less hinges until it stood wide open on a black interior When things fall out opportunely for the person concerned he is not apt to be critical about the how or why his own immediate personal convenience seeming a sufficient reason for the strangest oddities and revolutions in our sublunary things and so Denis without a moment's hesitation stepped within and partly closed the door behind him to conceal his place of refuge Nothing was further from his thoughts than to close it altogether, but for some inexplicable reason—perhaps by a spring or a weight—the ponderous mass of oak whipped itself out of his fingers and clanked to with a formidable rumble and a noise like the falling of an automatic bar

The round at that very moment debouched upon the terrace and proceeded to summon him with shouts and curses He heard them ferreting in the dark corners the stock of a lance even rattled along the outer surface of the door behind which he stood, but these gentlemen were in too high a humour to be long delayed and soon made off down a corkscrew pathway which had escaped Denis observation and passed out of sight and hearing along the battlements of the town

Denis breathed again He gave them a few minutes grace for fear of accidents and then groped about for some means of opening the door and slipping forth again The inner surface was quite smooth not a handle not a moulding, not a projection of any sort He got his finger nails round the edges and pulled but the mass was immovable He shook it it was as firm as a rock Denis de Beaulieu frowned and gave vent to a little noiseless whistle What ailed the door? he wondered Why was it open? How came it to shut so easily and so effectually after him? There was something obscure and underhand about all this that was little to the young man's fancy It looked like a snare, and yet who could suppose a snare in such a quiet by-street and in a house of so prosperous and even noble an exterior? And yet—snare or no snare, intentionally or unintentionally—here he was prettily trapped, and for the life of him he could see no way out of it again The darkness began to weigh upon

him He gave ear all was silent without, but within and close by he seemed to catch a faint sighing a faint sobbing rustle a little stealthy creak—as though many persons were at his side holding themselves quite still and governing even their respiration with the extreme of slyness The idea went to his vitals with a shock and he faced about suddenly as if to defend his life Then for the first time he became aware of a light about the level of his eyes and at some distance in the interior of the house—a vertical thread of light widening towards the bottom such as might escape between two wings of arras over a doorway To see anything was a relief to Denis it was like a piece of solid ground to a man labouring in a morass, his mind seized upon it with avidity and he stood staring at it and trying to piece together some logical conception of his surroundings Plainly there was a flight of steps ascending from his own level to that of the illuminated doorway, and indeed he thought he could make out another thread of light as fine as a needle and as faint as phosphorescence which might very well be reflected along the polished wood of a hand rail Since he had begun to suspect that he was not alone his heart had continued to beat with smothering violence and an intolerable desire for action of any sort had possessed itself of his spirit He was in deadly peril he believed What could be more natural than to mount the staircase lift the curtain and confront his difficulty at once? At least he would be dealing with something tangible at least he would be no longer in the dark He stepped slowly forward with outstretched hands until his foot struck the bottom step then he rapidly scaled the stairs stood for a moment to compose his expression, lifted the arras and went in

He found himself in a large apartment of polished stone There were three doors one on each of three sides, all similarly curtained with tapestry The fourth side was occupied by two large windows and a great stone chimney-piece carved with the arms of the Maletroits Denis recognized the bearings and was gratified to find himself in such good hands The room was strongly illuminated but it contained little furniture except a heavy table and a chair or two the hearth was innocent of fire and the pavement was but sparsely strewn with rushes clearly many days old

On a high chair beside the chimney and directly facing Denis as he entered sat a little old gentleman in a fur tippet He sat with his legs crossed and his hands folded and a cup of spiced wine stood by his elbow on a bracket on the wall His countenance had a strongly masculine cast not properly human but such as we see in the bull the goat or the domestic boar something equivocal and wheedling something greedy, brutal and dangerous The upper lip was inordinately full as though swollen by a blow or a toothache and the smile the peaked eyebrows, and the small strong eyes were quaintly and almost comically evil in expression Beautiful white hair hung straight all round his head like a saint's and fell in a single curl upon the tippet His beard and moustache were the pink of venerable sweetness Age probably in consequence of inordinate precautions had left no mark upon his hands and the Maletroit hand was famous It would be difficult to imagine anything at once so fleshy and so delicate in design the taper sensual fingers were like those of one of

Leonardo's women the fork of the thumb made a dimpled protuberance when closed the nails were perfectly shaped and of a dead surprising whiteness It rendered his aspect tenfold more redoubtable that a man with hands like these should keep them devoutly folded in his lap like a virgin martyr—that a man with so intense and startling an expression of face should sit patiently on his seat and contemplate people with an unwinking stare like a god or a god's statue His quiescence seemed ironical and treacherous it fitted so poorly with his looks

Such was Alain Sire de Maletroit

Denis and he looked silently at each other for a second or two

Pray step in, said the Sire de Maletroit I have been expecting you all the evening

He had not risen but he accompanied his words with a smile and a slight but courteous inclination of the head Partly from the smile partly from the strange musical murmur with which the Sire prefaced his observation Denis felt a strong shudder of disgust go through his marrow And what with disgust and honest confusion of mind, he could scarcely get words together in reply

I fear ' he said, ' that this is a double accident I am not the person you suppose me It seems you were looking for a visit but for my part nothing was further from my thoughts—nothing could be more contrary to my wishes—than this intrusion

Well well replied the old gentleman indulgently here you are which is the main point Seat yourself my friend and put yourself entirely at your ease We shall arrange our little affairs presently

Denis perceived that the matter was still complicated with some misconception and he hastened to continue his explanation

'Your door' he began

About my door' asked the other raising his peaked eyebrows A little piece of ingenuity ' And he shrugged his shoulders A hospitable fancy! By your own account, you were not desirous of making my acquaintance We old people look for such reluctance now and then and when it touches our honours we cast about until we find some way of overcoming it You arrive uninvited but believe me very welcome '

You persist in error, sir said Denis ' There can be no question between you and me I am a stranger in this countryside My name is Denis damoiseau de Beaulieu If you see me in your house it is only—

My found friend interrupted the other you will permit me to have my own ideas on that subject They probably differ from yours at the present moment, he added with a leer, but time will show which of us is in the right

Denis was convinced he had to do with a lunatic He seated himself with a shrug content to wait the upshot and a pause ensued during which he thought he could distinguish a hurried gabbling as of prayer from behind the arras immediately opposite him Sometimes there seemed to be but one person engaged sometimes two and the vehemence of the voice low as it was seemed to indicate either great haste or an agony of spirit It occurred to him that thi

piece of tapestry covered the entrance to the chapel he had noticed from without

The old gentleman meanwhile surveyed Denis from head to foot with a smile and from time to time emitted little noises like a bird or a mouse which seemed to indicate a high degree of satisfaction. This state of matters became rapidly insupportable and Denis to put an end to it, remarked politely that the wind had gone down.

The old gentleman fell into a fit of silent laughter so prolonged and violent that he became quite red in the face. Denis got upon his feet at once and put on his hat with a flourish.

Sir' he said if you are in your wits, you have affronted me grossly. If you are out of them I flatter myself I can find better employment for my brains than to talk with lunatics. My conscience is clear you have made a fool of me from the first moment, you have refused to hear my explanations, and now there is no power under God will make me stay here any longer, and if I cannot make my way out in a more decent fashion, I will break your door in pieces with my sword.

The Sire de Maletroit raised his right hand and wagged it at Denis with the fore and little fingers extended.

My dear nephew he said sit down'

'Nephew' retorted Denis you lie in your throat", and he snapped his fingers in his face.

Sit down you rogue' cried the old gentleman in a sudden, harsh voice like the barking of a dog. Do you fancy he went on that when I had made my little contrivance for the door I had stopped short with that? If you prefer to be bound hand and foot till your bones ache rise and try to go away. If you choose to remain a free young buck agreeably conversing with an old gentleman—why sit where you are in peace and God be with you.

Do you mean I am a prisoner? demanded Denis.

I state the facts replied the other 'I would rather leave the conclusion to yourself'

Denis sat down again. Externally he managed to keep pretty calm, but within he was now boiling with anger now chilled with apprehension. He no longer felt convinced that he was dealing with a madman. And if the old gentleman was sane what in God's name had he to look for? What absurd or tragical adventure had befallen him? What countenance was he to assume?

While he was thus unpleasantly reflecting the arras that overhung the chapel door was raised and a tall priest in his robes came forth and, giving a long keen stare at Denis said something in an undertone to Sire de Maletroit.

She is in a better frame of spirit?" asked the latter.

'She is more resigned, messire, replied the priest.

Now the Lord help her she is hard to please! sneered the old gentleman. A likely stripling—not ill born—and of her own choosing, too? Why what more would the jade have?'

The situation is not usual for a young damsel said the other, "and some what trying to her blushes.

She should have thought of that before she began the dance It was none of my choosing God knows that but since she is in it by our Lady she shall carry it to the end And then addressing Denis Monsieur de Beaulieu he asked may I present you to my niece? she has been waiting your arrival I may say with even greater impatience than myself

Denis had resigned himself with a good grace—all he desired was to know the worst of it as speedily as possible so he rose at once and bowed in acquiescence The Sire de Maletroit followed his example and limped with the assistance of the chaplain's arm towards the chapel door The priest pulled aside the arras, and all three entered The building had considerable architectural pretensions A light groining sprang from six stout columns and hung down in two rich pendants from the centre of the vault The place terminated behind the altar in a round end embossed and honeycombed with a superfluity of ornament in relief and pierced by many little windows shaped like stars trefoils, or wheels These windows were imperfectly glazed so that the night air circulated freely in the chapel The tapers of which there must have been half a hundred burning on the altar were unmercifully blown about and the light went through many different phases of brilliancy and semi eclipse On the steps in front of the altar knelt a young girl richly attired as a bride A chill settled over Denis as he observed her costume he fought with desperate energy against the conclusion that was being thrust upon his mind it could not—it should not—be as he feared

Blanche said the Sire in his most flute like tones I have brought a friend to see you my little girl turn around and give him your pretty hand It is good to be devout but it is necessary to be polite my niece

The girl rose to her feet and turned towards the new comer She moved all of a piece, and shame and exhaustion were expressed in every line of her fresh young body, and she held her head down and kept her eyes upon the pavement as she came slowly forward In the course of her advance her eyes fell upon Denis de Beaulieu's feet—feet of which he was justly vain be it remarked and wore in the most elegant accoutrement even while traveling She paused—started as if his yellow boots had conveyed some shocking meaning—and glanced suddenly up into the wearer's countenance Their eyes met shame gave place to horror and terror in her looks, the blood left her lips with a piercing scream she covered her face with her hands and sank upon the chapel floor

That is not the man! she cried "My uncle that is not the man!"

The Sire de Maletroit chirped agreeably Of course not he said "I expected as much It was so unfortunate you could not remember his name

Indeed, she cried indeed I have never seen this person till this moment I have never so much as set eyes upon him—I never wish to see him again Sir' she said turning to Denis if you are a gentleman you will bear me out Have I ever seen you—have you ever seen me—before this accursed hour?

To speak for myself I have never had that pleasure answered the young man. This is the first time, messire, that I have met with your engaging niece

The old gentleman shrugged his shoulders

'I am distressed to hear it' he said. 'But it is never too late to begin. I had little more acquaintance with my own late lady ere I married her, which proves' he added with a grimace 'that these impromptu marriages may often produce an excellent understanding in the long run. As the bridegroom is to have a voice in the matter I will give him two hours to make up for lost time before we proceed with the ceremony.' And he turned towards the door, followed by the clergyman.

The girl was on her feet in a moment. 'My uncle, you cannot be in earnest,' she said. 'I declare before God I will stab myself rather than be forced on that young man. The heart rises at it. God forbids such marriages. You dishonour your white hair. Oh my uncle, pity me! There is not a woman in all the world but would prefer death to such a nuptial. Is it possible,' she added falteringly, 'is it possible that you do not believe me—that you still think this—and she pointed at Denis with a tremor of anger and contempt—that you still think this to be the man?'

'Frankly,' said the old gentleman pausing on the threshold. 'I do. But let me explain to you once for all. Blanche de Maletroit, my way of thinking about this affair. When you took it into your head to dishonour my family and the name that I have borne in peace and war for more than three-score years you forfeited, not only the right to question my designs but that of looking me in the face. If your father had been alive he would have spat on you and turned you out of doors. His was the hand of iron. You may bless your God you have only to deal with the hand of velvet mademoiselle. It was my duty to get you married without delay. Out of pure goodwill I have tried to find your own gallant for you. And I believe I have succeeded. But before God and all the holy angels, Blanche de Maletroit, if I have not, I care not one jack straw. So let me recommend you to be polite to our young friend, for upon my word your next groom may be less appetising.'

And with that he went out with the chaplain at his heels and the arras fell behind the pair.

The girl turned upon Denis with flashing eyes.

'And what sir,' she demanded, 'may be the meaning of all this?'

God knows returned Denis gloomily. 'I am a prisoner in this house which seems full of mad people. More I know not, and nothing do I understand.'

'And pray how came you here?' she asked.

He told her as briefly as he could. 'For the rest,' he added, 'perhaps you will follow my example, and tell me the answer to all these riddles and what, in God's name, is like to be the end of it.'

She stood silent for a little and he could see her lips tremble and her tearless eyes burn with a feverish lustre. Then she pressed her forehead in both hands.

'Alas how my head aches!' she said wearily—'to say nothing of my poor heart! But it is due to you to know my story unmaidenly as it must seem. I am called Blanche de Maletroit. I have been without father or mother for—oh! for as long as I can recollect and indeed I have been most unhappy all

my life Three months ago a young captain began to stand near me every day in church I could see that I pleased him I am much to blame but I was so glad that any one should love me and when he passed me a letter I took it home with me and read it with great pleasure Since that time he has written many He was so anxious to speak with me poor fellow¹ and kept asking me to leave the door open some evening that we might have two words upon the stair For he knew how much my uncle trusted me She gave something like a sob at that and it was a moment before she could go on My uncle is a hard man but he is very shrewd she said at last He has performed many feats in war and was a great person at court and much trusted by Queen Isabeau in old days How he came to suspect me I cannot tell but it is hard to keep anything from his knowledge and this morning as we came from mass he took my hand in his forced it open and read my little billet walking by my side all the while When he had finished he gave it back to me with great politeness It contained another request to have the door left open, and this has been the ruin of us all My uncle kept me strictly in my room until evening and then ordered me to dress myself as you see me—a hard mockery for a young girl do you not think so² I suppose when he could not prevail with me to tell him the young captain's name he must have laid a trap for him into which alas³ you have fallen in the anger of God I looked for much confusion for how could I tell whether he was willing to take me for his wife on these sharp terms⁴ He might have been trifling with me from the first or I might have made myself too cheap in his eyes But truly I had not looked for such a shameful punishment as this⁵ I could not think that God would let a girl be so disgraced before a young man And now I have told you all and I can scarcely hope that you will not despise me '

Denis made her a respectful inclination

Madam he said you have honoured me by your confidence It remains for me to prove that I am not unworthy of the honour Is Messire de Maletroit at hand?

I believe he is writing in the salle without she answered

May I lead you thither madam⁶ asked Denis offering his hand with his most courtly bearing

She accepted it and the pair passed out of the chapel Blanche in a very drooping and shame-faced condition but Denis strutting and ruffling in the consciousness of a mission and the boyish certainty of accomplishing it with honour

The Sire de Maletroit rose to meet them with an ironical obeisance

Sir said Denis with the grandest possible air I believe I am to have some say in the matter of this marriage and let me tell you at once I will be no party to forcing the inclination of this young lady Had it been freely offered to me I should have been proud to accept her hand for I perceive she is as good as she is beautiful, but as things are I have now the honour messire, of refusing

Blanche looked at him with gratitude in her eyes but the old gentleman only smiled and smiled until his smile grew positively sickening to Denis

I am afraid he said Monsieur de Beaulieu that you do not perfectly understand the choice I have to offer you Follow me I beseech you to this window And he led the way to one of the large windows which stood open on the night You observe he went on there is an iron ring in the upper masonry and reeved through that a very efficacious rope Now, mark my words if you should find your disinclination to my niece's person insurmountable I shall have you hanged out of this window before sunrise I shall only proceed to such an extremity with the greatest regret you may believe me For it is not at all your death that I desire but my niece's establishment in life At the same time, it must come to that if you prove obstinate Your family Monsieur de Beaulieu is very well in its way but if you sprang from Charlemagne you should not refuse the hand of a Maletroit with impunity—not if she had been as common as the Paris road—not if she were as hideous as the gargoyle over my door Neither my niece nor you nor my own private feelings move me at all in this matter The honour of my house has been compromised I believe you to be the guilty person at least you are now in the secret and you can hardly wonder if I request you to wipe out the stain If you will not your blood be on your own head! It will be no great satisfaction to me to have your interesting relics kicking their heels in the breeze below my windows but half a loaf is better than no bread and if I cannot cure the dishonour I shall at least stop the scandal

There was a pause

I believe there are other ways of settling such imbroglios among gentlemen said Denis You wear a sword and I hear you have used it with distinction

The Sire de Maletroit made a signal to the chaplain who crossed the room with long silent strides and raised the arras over the third of the three doors It was only a moment before he let it fall again but Denis had time to see a dusky passage full of armed men

'When I was a little younger, I should have been delighted to honour you Monsieur de Beaulieu' said Sire Alain but I am now too old Faithful retainers are the sinews of age and I must employ the strength I have This is one of the hardest things to swallow as a man grows up in years, but with a little patience even this becomes habitual You and the lady seem to prefer the salle for what remains of your two hours and as I have no desire to cross your preference I shall resign it to your use with all the pleasure in the world No haste! he added holding up his hand as he saw a dangerous look come into Denis de Beaulieu's face If your mind revolts against hanging it will be time enough two hours hence to throw yourself out of the window or upon the pikes of my retainers Two hours of life are always two hours A great many things may turn up in even as little a while as that And besides if I understand her appearance my niece has still something to say to you You will not disfigure your last hours by a want of politeness to a lady'

Denis looked at Blanche and she made him an imploring gesture

It is likely that the old gentleman was hugely pleased at this symptom of an understanding, for he smiled on both and added sweetly If you will

give me your word of honour Monsieur de Beaulieu to await my return at the end of the two hours before attempting anything desperate I shall withdraw my retainers and let you speak in greater privacy with mademoiselle

Denis again glanced at the girl who seemed to beseech him to agree

I give you my word of honour he said

Messire de Maletroit bowed and proceeded to limp about the apartment clearing his throat the while with that odd musical chirp which had already grown so irritating in the ears of Denis de Beaulieu He first possessed himself of some papers which lay upon the table then he went to the mouth of the passage and appeared to give an order to the men behind the arras and lastly he hobbled out through the door by which Denis had come in turning upon the threshold to address a last smiling bow to the young couple and followed by the chaplain with a hand lamp

No sooner were they alone than Blanche advanced towards Denis with her hands extended Her face was flushed and excited and her eyes shone with tears

You shall not die! she cried you shall marry me after all'

You seem to think, madam replied Denis that I stand much in fear of death

Oh no no' she said 'I see you are no poltroon It is for my own sake —I could not bear to have you slain for such a scruple

I am afraid returned Denis that you underrate the difficulty madam What you may be too generous to refuse I may be too proud to accept In a moment of noble feeling towards me, you forget what you perhaps owe to others'

He had the decency to keep his eyes upon the floor as he said this and after he had finished so as not to spy upon her confusion She stood silent for a moment then walked suddenly away and falling on her uncle's chair fairly burst out sobbing Denis was in the acme of embarrassment He looked round as if to seek for inspiration, and seeing a stool plumped down upon it for something to do There he sat, playing with the guard of his rapier and wishing himself dead a thousand times over and buried in the nastiest kitchen heap in France His eyes wandered round the apartment but found nothing to arrest them There were such wide spaces between the furniture the light fell so badly and cheerlessly over all the dark outside air looked in so coldly through the windows that he thought he had never seen a church so vast nor a tomb so melancholy The regular sobs of Blanche de Maletroit measured out the time like the ticking of a clock He read the device upon the shield over and over again until his eyes became obscured he stared into shadowy corners until he imagined they were swarming with horrible animals and every now and again he awoke with a start to remember that his last two hours were running and death was on the march

Oftener and oftener as the time went on did his glance settle on the girl herself Her face was bowed forward and covered with her hands and she was shaken at intervals by the convulsive hiccup of grief Even thus she was not an unpleasant object to dwell upon, so plump and yet so fine, with a warm

brown skin and the most beautiful hair Denis thought in the whole world of womankind Her hands were like her uncle's but they were more in place at the end of her young arms and looked infinitely soft and caressing He remembered how her blue eyes had shone upon him full of anger pity and innocence And the more he dwelt on her perfections the uglier death looked, and the more deeply was he smitten with penitence at her continued tears Now he felt that no man could have the courage to leave a world which contained so beautiful a creature, and now he would have given forty minutes of his last hour to have unsaid his cruel speech

Suddenly a hoarse and ragged peal of cockcrow rose to their ears from the dark valley below the windows And this shattering noise in the silence all around was like a light in a dark place and shook them both out of their reflections

Alas can I do nothing to help you? she said looking up

'Madam replied Denis with a fine irrelevancy if I have said anything to wound you believe me it was for your own sake and not for mine

She thanked him with a tearful look

I feel your position cruelly he went on The world has been bitter hard on you Your uncle is a disgrace to mankind Believe me madam there is no young gentleman in all France but would be glad of my opportunity to die in doing you a momentary service

'I know already that you can be very brave and generous' she answered 'What I *want* to know is whether I can serve you—now or afterwards she added with a quaver

Most certainly he answered with a smile Let me sit beside you as if I were a friend instead of a foolish intruder try to forget how awkwardly we are placed to one another make my last moments go pleasantly and you will do me the chief service possible

You are very gallant she added with a yet deeper sadness very gallant and it somehow pains me But draw nearer if you please and if you find anything to say to me you will at least make certain of a very friendly listener Ah! Monsieur de Beaulieu how can I look you in the face? And she fell to weeping again with a renewed effusion

Madam said Denis taking her hand in both of his 'reflect on the little time I have before me and the great bitterness into which I am cast by the sight of your distress Spare me in my last moments the spectacle of what I cannot cure even with the sacrifice of my life

I am very selfish, answered Blanche I will be braver Monsieur de Beaulieu for your sake But think if I can do you no kindness in the future—if you have no friends to whom I could carry your adieux Charge me as heavily as you can every burden will lighten by so little the invaluable gratitudo I owe you Put it in my power to do something more for you than weep

My mother is married again and has a young family to care for My brother Guchard will inherit my fiefs and if I am not in error that will content him amply for my death Life is a little vapour that passeth away as we are told by those in holy orders When a man is in a fair way and sees all life

open in front of him he seems to himself to make a very important figure in the world His horse whinnies to him the trumpets blow and the girls look out of window as he rides into town before his company he receives many assurances of trust and regard—sometimes by express in a letter—sometimes face to face with persons of great consequence falling on his neck It is not wonderful if his head is turned for a time But once he is dead were he as brave as Hercules or as wise as Solomon he is soon forgotten It is not ten years since my father fell, with many other knights around him in a very fierce encounter and I do not think that any one of them nor so much as the name of the fight is now remembered No no madam the nearer you come to it you see that death is a dark and dusty corner where a man gets into his tomb and has the door shut after him till the judgment day I have few friends just now and once I am dead I shall have none'

Ah Monsieur de Beaulieu' she exclaimed you forget Blanche de Male troit'

You have a sweet nature madam and you are pleased to estimate a little service far beyond its worth

It is not that,' she answered You mistake me if you think I am so easily touched by my own concerns I say so because you are the noblest man I have ever met because I recognise in you a spirit that would have made even a common person famous in the land

And yet here I die in a mouse trap—with no more noise about it than my own speaking answered he

A look of pain crossed her face and she was silent for a little while Then a light came into her eyes and with a smile she spoke again

I cannot have my champion think meanly of himself Anyone who gives his life for another will be met in Paradise by all the heralds and angels of the Lord God And you have no such cause to hang your head For Pray do you think me beautiful? she asked with a deep flush

Indeed, madam I do he said

I am glad of that she answered heartily Do you think there are many men in France who have been asked in marriage by a beautiful maiden—with her own lips—and who have refused her to her face? I know you men would half despise such a triumph, but believe me we women know more of what is precious in love There is nothing that should set a person higher in his own esteem, and we women would prize nothing more dearly

You are very good he said, but you cannot make me forget that I was asked in pity and not for love

I am not so sure of that she replied holding down her head 'Hear me to an end Monsieur de Beaulieu I know how you must despise me I feel you are right to do so I am too poor a creature to occupy one thought of your mind although, alas! you must die for me this morning But when I asked you to marry me indeed and indeed it was because I respected and admired you and loved you with my whole soul from the very moment that you took my part against my uncle If you had seen yourself and how noble you looked, you would pity rather than despise me And now she went on,

hurriedly checking him with her hand 'although I have laid aside all reserve and told you so much remember that I know your sentiments towards me already I would not, believe me being nobly born weary you with importunities into consent I too have a pride of my own and I declare before the holy mother of God if you should now go back from your word already given, I would no more marry you than I would marry my uncle's groom'

Denis smiled a little bitterly

'It is a small love' he said 'that shies at a little pride'

She made no answer, although she probably had her own thought

Come hither to the window he said with a sigh 'Here is the dawn'

And indeed the dawn was already beginning The hollow of the sky was full of essential daylight colourless and clean and the valley underneath was flooded with a grey reflection A few thin vapors clung in the coves of the forest or lay along the winding course of the river The scene disengaged a surprising effect of stillness which was hardly interrupted when the cocks began once more to crow among the steadings Perhaps the same fellow who had made so horrid a clangour in the darkness not half an hour before now sent up the merriest cheer to greet the coming day A little wind went bustling and eddying among the tree tops underneath the windows And still the daylight kept flooding insensibly out of the east which was soon to grow incandescent and cast up that red hot cannonball the rising sun

Denis looked out over all this with a bit of a shiver He had taken her hand and retained it in his almost unconsciously

Has the day begun already?' she said, and then illogically enough 'the night has been so long! Alas! what shall we say to my uncle when he returns?''

What you will said Denis, and he pressed her fingers in his

She was silent

'Blanche' he said with a swift uncertain passionate utterance, "you have seen whether I fear death You must know well enough that I would as gladly leap out of the window into the empty air as to lay a finger on you without your free and full consent But if you care for me at all do not let me lose my life in a misapprehension for I love you better than the whole world, and though I will die for you blithely it would be like all the joys of Paradise to live on and spend my life in your service"

As he stopped speaking a bell began to ring loudly in the interior of the house and a clatter of armour in the corridor showed that the retainers were returning to their post and the two hours were at an end

After all that you have heard?' she whispered leaning towards him with her lips and eyes

I have heard nothing" he replied

'The captain's name was Florimond de Champdivers' she said in his ear

I did not hear it,' he answered, taking her supple body in his arms and covering her wet face with kisses

A melodious chirping was audible behind followed by a beautiful chuckle, and the voice of Messire de Maletroit wished his new nephew a good morning

PROVIDENCE AND THE GUITAR

I

MONSIEUR LEON BERTHELINI had a great care of his appearance and sedulously suited his deportment to the costume of the hour. He affected something Spanish in his air and something of the bandit with a flavour of Rembrandt at home. In person he was decidedly small and inclined to be stout: his face was the picture of good humour, his dark eyes which were very expressive told of a kind heart, a brisk merry nature and the most indefatigable spirits. If he had worn the clothes of the period you would have set him down for a hitherto undiscovered hybrid between the barber the innkeeper and the affable dispensing chemist. But in the outrageously of velvet jacket and flapped hat with trousers that were more accurately described as fleshings a white handkerchief cavalierly knotted at his neck, a shock of Olympian curls upon his brow and his feet shod through all weathers in the slenderest of Moliere shoes—you had but to look at him and you knew you were in the presence of a Great Creature. When he wore an overcoat he scorned to pass the sleeves, a single button held it round his shoulders, it was tossed backwards after the manner of a cloak and carried with the gait and presence of an Almaviva. I am of opinion that M. Berthelini was nearing forty. But he had a boy's heart gloried in his finery and walked through life like a child in a perpetual dramatic performance. If he were not Almaviva after all, it was not for lack of making believe. And he enjoyed the artist's compensation. If he were not really Almaviva he was sometimes just as happy as though he were.

I have seen him at moments when he has fancied himself alone with his Maker, adopt so gay and chivalrous a bearing and represent his own part with so much warmth and conscience that the illusion became catching and I believed implicitly in the Great Creature's pose.

But, alas! life cannot be entirely conducted on these principles: man cannot live by Almavivery alone and the Great Creature having failed upon several theatres was obliged to step down every evening from his heights and sing from half a dozen to a dozen comic songs twang a guitar keep a country audience in good humour and preside finally over the mysteries of a tombola.

Madame Berthelini, who was art and part with him in these undignified labours had perhaps a higher position in the scale of beings and enjoyed a natural dignity of her own. But her heart was not any more rightly placed for that would have been impossible and she had acquired a little air of melancholy attractive enough in its way but not good to see like the wholesome, skyscraping boyish spirits of her lord.

He indeed swam like a kite on a fair wind high above earthly troubles. Detonations of temper were not unfrequent in the zones he travelled, but sulky fogs and tearful depressions were there alike unknown. A well delivered blow upon a table or a noble attitude imitated from Melingne or Frederic relieved

his irritation like a vengeance Though the heaven had fallen if he had played his part with propriety Berthelini had been content! And the man's atmosphere if not his example reacted on his wife for the couple doted on each other and although you would have thought they walked in different worlds yet continued to walk hand in hand

It chanced one day that Monsieur and Madame Berthelini descended with two boxes and a guitar in a fat case at the station of the little town of Castel le Gachis and the omnibus carried them with their effects to the Hotel of the Black Head This was a dismal conventional building in a narrow street, capable of standing siege when once the gates were shut and smelling strangely in the interior of straw and chocolate and old feminine apparel Berthelini paused upon the threshold with a painful premonition In some former state, it seemed to him he had visited a hostelry that smelt not otherwise, and been ill received

The landlord a tragic person in a large felt hat, rose from a business table under the key rack and came forward, removing his hat with both hands as he did so

"Sir I salute you May I inquire what is your charge for artists?" inquired Berthelini with a courtesy at once splendid and insinuating

For artists? said the landlord His countenance fell and the smile of welcome disappeared Oh artists he added brutally four francs a day And he turned his back upon these inconsiderable customers

A commercial traveller is received he also upon a reduction—yet is he welcome yet can he command the fatted calf but an artist had he the manners of an Almaviva were he dressed like Solomon in all his glory is received like a dog and served like a timid lady travelling alone

Accustomed as he was to the rubs of his profession Berthelini was unpleasantly affected by the landlord's manner

Elvira said he to his wife 'mark my words Castel le Gachis is a tragic folly

Wait till we see what we take replied Elvira

"We shall take nothing returned Berthelini 'we shall feed upon insults I have an eye Elvira I have a spirit of divination, and this place is accursed The landlord has been discourteous the Commissary will be brutal the audience will be sordid and uproarious and you will take a cold upon your throat We have been besotted enough to come the die is cast—it will be a second Sedan

Sedan was a town hateful to the Berthelini's not only from patriotism (for they were French and answered after the flesh to the somewhat homely name of Duval) but because it had been the scene of their most sad reverses In that place they had lain three weeks in pawn for their hotel bill, and had it not been for a surprising stroke of fortune they might have been lying there in pawn until this day To mention the name of Sedan was for the Berthelini's to dip the brush in earthquake and eclipse Count Almaviva slouched his hat with a gesture expressive of despair, and even Elvira felt as if ill fortune had been personally evoked

Let us ask for breakfast said she with a woman's tact

The Commissary of Police of Castel le Gachis was a large red Commissary, pimpled and subject to a strong cutaneous transpiration I have repeated the name of his office because he was so very much more a Commissary than a man The spirit of his dignity had entered into him He carried his corporation as if it were something official Whenever he insulted a common citizen it seemed to him as if he were adroitly flattering the Government by a side wind, in default of dignity he was brutal from an overweening sense of duty His office was a den whence passers by could hear rude accents laying down, not the law but the good pleasure of the Commissary

Six several times in the course of the day did M Berthelini hurry thither in quest of the requisite permission for his evening's entertainment six several times he found the official was abroad Leon Berthelini began to grow quite a familiar figure in the streets of Castel le Gachis he became a local celebrity and he was pointed out as the man who was looking for the Commissary Idle children attached themselves to his footsteps and trotted after him back and forward between the hotel and the office Leon might try as he liked he might roll cigarettes he might straddle he might cock his hat at a dozen different jaunty inclinations—the part of Almaviva was under the circumstances difficult to play

As he passed the market place upon the seventh excursion the Commissary was pointed out to him where he stood with his waist coat unbuttoned and his hands behind his back to superintend the sale and measurement of butter Berthelini threaded his way through the market stalls and baskets and accosted the dignitary with a bow which was a triumph of the histrionic art

I have the honour he asked of meeting M le Commissaire?

The Commissary was affected by the nobility of his address He excelled Leon in the depth if not in the airy grace of his salutation

The honour said he is mine'

I am continued the strolling player I am sir an artist and I have permitted myself to interrupt you on an affair of business To night I give a trifling musical entertainment at the Cafe of the Triumphs of the Plough—permit me to offer you this little programme—and I have come to ask you for the necessary authorisation

At the word 'artist' the Commissary had replaced his hat with the air of a person who having condescended too far should suddenly remember the duties of his rank

Go go said he I am busy—I am measuring butter

Heathen Jew' thought Leon Permit me, sir' he resumed aloud I have gone six times already—

Put up your bills if you choose interrupted the Commissary In an hour or so I will examine your papers at the office But now go I am busy

Measuring butter' thought Berthelini Oh France and it is for this that we made '93'

The preparations were soon made, the bills posted programmes laid on the dinner table of every hotel in the town and a stage erected at one end of the

Cafe of the Triumphs of the Plough but when Leon returned to the office, the Commissary was once more abroad

He is like Madame Benoiton thought Leon Fichu Commissaire! And just then he met the man face to face

Here, sir said he are my papers Will you be pleased to verify? But the Commissary was now intent upon dinner

'No use he replied no use I am busy, I am quite satisfied Give your entertainment

And he hurried on

'Fichu Commissaire! thought Leon

II

THE AUDIENCE was pretty large and the proprietor of the cafe made a good thing of it in beer But the Berthelinis exerted themselves in vain

Leon was radiant in velveteen he had a rakish way of smoking a cigarette between his songs that was worth money in itself he underlined his comic points so that the dullest numskull in Castel le Gachis had a notion when to laugh and he handled his guitar in a manner worthy of himself Indeed his play with that instrument was as good as a whole romantic drama, it was so dashing so florid and so cavalier

Elvira on the other hand sang her patriotic and romantic songs with more than usual expression her voice had charm and plangency and as Leon looked at her in her low-bodied miroon dress with her arms bare to the shoulder, and a red flower set provocatively in her corset he repeated to himself for the many hundredth time that she was one of the loveliest creatures in the world of women

Alas! when she went round with the tambourine the golden youth of Castel le Gachis turned from her coldly Here and there a single halfpenny was forthcoming the net result of a collection never exceeded half a franc, and the Maire himself after seven different applications had contributed exactly two-pence A certain chill began to settle upon the artists themselves it seemed as if they were singing to slugs Apollo himself might have lost heart with such an audience The Berthelinis struggled against the impression they put their back into their work they sang louder and louder the guitar twanged like a living thing and at last Leon arose in his might, and burst with inimitable conviction into his great song 'Y a des honnetes gens partout!' Never had he given more proof of his artistic mastery it was his intimate indefeasible conviction that Castel le Gachis formed an exception to the law he was now lyrically proclaiming and was peopled exclusively by thieves and bullies, and yet as I say he flung it down like a challenge he trolled it forth like an article of faith and his face so beamed the while that you would have thought he must make converts of the benches

He was at the top of his register with his head thrown back and his mouth open when the door was thrown violently open and a pair of new comers

marched noisily into the cafe It was the Commissary followed by the Garde Champetre

The undaunted Berthelini still continued to proclaim 'Y a des honnetes gens partout' But now the sentiment produced an audible titter among the audience Berthelini wondered why, he did not know the antecedents of the Garde Champetre he had never heard of a little story about postage stamps But the public knew all about the postage stamps and enjoyed the coincidence hugely

The Commissary planted himself upon a vacant chair with somewhat the air of Cromwell visiting the Rump and spoke in occasional whispers to the Garde Champetre who remained respectfully standing at his back The eyes of both were directed upon Berthelini who persisted in his statement

'Y a des honnetes gens partout' he was just chanting for the twentieth time when up got the Commissary upon his feet and waved brutally to the singer with his cane

'Is it me you want?' inquired Leon, stopping in his song

'It is you' replied the potentate

'Fichu Commissaire!' thought Leon and he descended from the stage and made his way to the functionary

'How does it happen sir' said the Commissary, swelling in person, 'that I find you mountebanking in a public cafe without my permission'

'Without' cried the indignant Leon 'Permit me to remind you—'

'Come come sir' said the Commissary 'I desire no explanations'

'I care nothing about what you desire' returned the singer 'I choose to give them and I will not be gagged I am an artist sir a distinction that you cannot comprehend I received your permission and stand here upon the strength of it, interfere with me who dare'

'You have not got my signature I tell you' cried the Commissary 'Show me my signature! Where is my signature?'

That was just the question, where was his signature? Leon recognised that he was in a hole but his spirit rose with the occasion and he blustered nobly tossing back his curls The Commissary played up to him in the character of tyrant, and as the one leaned farther forward, the other leaned farther back—majesty confronting fury The audience had transferred their attention to this new performance and listened with that silent gravity common to all French men in the neighbourhood of the Police Elvira had sat down she was used to these distractions and it was rather melancholy than fear that now oppressed her

'Another word,' cried the Commissary, 'and I arrest you'

'Arrest me?' shouted Leon 'I defy you!'

'I am the Commissary of Police, said the official

Leon commanded his feelings and replied, with great delicacy of innuendo—
So it would appear

The point was too refined for Castel le Gachis, it did not raise a smile and as for the Commissary he simply made the singer follow him to his office and

directed his proud footsteps towards the door. There was nothing for it but to obey. Leon did so with a proper pantomime of indifference, but it was a leek to eat and there was no denying it.

The Maire had slipped out and was already waiting at the Commissary's door. Now the Maire in France is the refuge of the oppressed. He stands between his people and the boisterous rigours of the Police. He can sometimes understand what is said to him, he is not always pulled up beyond measure by his dignity. Tis a thing worth the knowledge of travellers. When all seems over and a man has made up his mind to injustice he has still like the heroes of romance a little bugle at his belt whereupon to blow, and the Maire a comfortable *deus ex machina*, may still descend to deliver him from the minions of the law. The Maire of Castel le Gachis although inaccessible to the charms of music as retailed by the Berthelinis had no hesitation whatever as to the rights of the matter. He instantly fell foul of the Commissary in very high terms and the Commissary pricked by this humiliation, accepted battle on the point of fact. The argument lasted some little while with varying success until at length victory inclined so plainly to the Commissary's side that the Maire was fain to reassert himself by the exercise of authority. He had been out argued but he was still the Maire. And so turning from his interlocutor he briefly but kindly recommended Leon to get back instanter to his concert.

It is already growing late he added.

Leon did not wait to be told twice. He returned to the Cafe of the Triumphs of the Plough with all expedition. Alas! the audience had melted away during his absence. Elvira was sitting in a very disconsolate attitude on the guitar-box she had watched the company dispersing by twos and threes and the prolonged spectacle had somewhat overwhelmed her spirits. Each man she reflected retired with a certain portion of her earnings in his pocket, and she saw to night's board and to morrow's railway expenses and finally even to-morrow's dinner walk one after another out of the cafe door and disappear into the night.

What was it?" she asked languidly.

But Leon did not answer. He was looking round him on the scene of defeat. Scarce a score of listeners remained and these of the least promising sort. The minute hand of the clock was climbing upward towards eleven.

It's a lost battle said he and then taking up the money box he turned it out. Three francs seventy-five! he cried as against four of board and six of railway fares and no time for the tombola! Elvira this is Waterloo. And he sat down and passed both hands desperately among the curls "O Fichu Commissaire!" he cried, Fichu Commissaire!

Let us get the things together and be off returned Elvira "We might try another song but there is not six halfpence in the room."

Six halfpence? cried Leon "six hundred thousand devils! There is not a human creature in the town—nothing but pigs and dogs and commissaires! Pray heaven we get safe to bed."

Don't imagine things! exclaimed Elvira, with a shudder. And with that they set to work on their preparations. The tobacco jar

the cigarette-holder, the three papers of shirt studs which were to have been the prizes of the tombola had the tombola come off were made into a bundle with the music the guitar was stowed into the fat guitar case and Elvira having thrown a thin shawl about her neck and shoulders the pair issued from the cafe and set off for the Black Head

As they crossed the market place the church bell rang out eleven It was a dark, mild night, and there was no one in the streets

‘It is all very fine’ said Leon, but I have a presentiment The night is not yet done’

III

THE ‘BLACK HEAD’ presented not a single chunk of light upon the street, and the carriage gate was closed

‘This is unprecedented’ observed Leon ‘An inn closed by five minutes after eleven! And there were several commercial travellers in the cafe up to a late hour Elvira, my heart misgives me Let us ring the bell

The bell had a potent note and being swung under the arch it filled the house from top to bottom with surly clanging reverberations The sound accentuated the conventional appearance of the building a wintry sentiment, a thought of prayer and mortification took hold upon Elvira’s mind and as for Leon he seemed to be reading the stage directions for a lugubrious fifth act

‘This is your fault,’ said Elvira ‘this is what comes of fancying things!’

Again Leon pulled the bell rope, again the solemn tocsin awoke the echoes of the inn, and ere they had died away a light glimmered in the carriage entrance, and a powerful voice was heard upraised and tremulous with wrath

What’s all this? cried the tragic host through the spars of the gate Hard upon twelve and you come clamouring like Prussians at the door of a respectable hotel? Oh! he cried ‘I know you now! Common singers! People in trouble with the police! And you present yourselves at midnight like lords and ladies? Be off with you!

You will permit me to remind you’ replied Leon in thrilling tones that I am a guest in your house that I am properly inscribed, and that I have deposited baggage to the value of four hundred francs’

You cannot get in at this hour returned the man This is no thieves’ tavern for mohocks and night rakes and organ grinders’

Brute! cried Elvira for the organ grinders touched her home

‘Then I demand my baggage said Leon with unabated dignity

I know nothing of your baggage replied the landlord

You detain my baggage? You dare to detain my baggage? cried the singer

‘Who are you?’ returned the landlord It is dark—I cannot recognise you

Very well, then—you detain my baggage concluded Leon You shall smart for this I will weary out your life with persecutions, I will drag you from court to court if there is justice to be had in France it shall be rendered between you and me And I will make you a by-word I will put you in a

song—a scurrilous song—an indecent song—a popular song—which the boys shall sing to you in the street and come and howl through these spars at midnight!

He had gone on raising his voice at every phrase for all the while the landlord was very placidly retiring and now when the last glimmer of light had vanished from the arch and the last footstep died away in the interior Leon turned to his wife with a heroic countenance

Elvira said he I have now a duty in life I shall destroy that man as Eugene Sue destroyed the concierge Let us come at once to the Gendarmerie and begin our vengeance

He picked up the guitar case which had been propped against the wall and they set forth through the silent and ill lighted town with burning hearts

The Gendarmerie was concealed beside the telegraph office at the bottom of a vast court which was partly laid out in gardens and here all the shepherds of the public lay locked in grateful sleep It took a deal of knocking to waken one, and he when he came at last to the door could find no other remark but that it was none of his business Leon reasoned with him threatened him besought him here he said was Madame Berthelini in evening dress—a delicate woman—in an interesting condition —the last was thrown in I fancy, for effect and to all this the man at arms made the same answer

It is none of my business, said he

Very well said Leon then we shall go to the Commissary Thither they went the office was closed and dark but the house was close by and Leon was soon swinging the bell like a madman The Commissary's wife appeared at the window She was a thread paper creature, and informed him that the Commissary had not yet come home

Is he at the Maire's? demanded Leon

She thought that was not unlikely

Where is the Maire's house? he asked

And she gave him some rather vague information on that point

Stay you here Elvira ' said Leon, lest I should miss him by the way If when I return I find you here no longer, I shall follow at once to the Black Head

And he set out to find the Maire's It took him some ten minutes' wandering among blind lanes and when he arrived it was already half an hour past midnight A long white garden wall overhung by some thick chestnuts a door with a letter box and an iron bell pull that was all that could be seen of the Maire's domicile Leon took the bell pull in both hands and danced furiously upon the side walk The bell itself was just upon the other side of the wall it responded to his activity and scattered an alarming clangour far and wide into the night

A window was thrown open in a house across the street and a voice inquired the cause of this untimely uproar

I wish the Maire said Leon

He has been in bed this hour " returned the voice

He must get up again retorted Leon, and he was for tackling the bell pull once more

'You will never make him hear' responded the voice 'The garden is of

great extent the house is at the farther end and both the Maire and his house keeper are deaf

Ah! said Leon pausing The Maire is deaf is he? That explains And he thought of the evening's concert with a momentary feeling of relief Ah! he continued and so the Maire is deaf and the garden vast and the house at the far end?

And you might ring all night added the voice and be none the better for it You would only keep me awake

Thank you neighbour replied the singer You shall sleep

And he made off again at his best pace for the Commissary's Elvira was still walking to and fro before the door

He has not come? asked Leon

Not he she replied

'Good returned Leon I am sure our man's inside Let me see the guitar case I shall lay this siege in form Elvira I am angry I am indignant, I am truculently inclined but I thank my Maker I have still a sense of fun The unjust judge shall be importuned in a serenade Elvira Set him up—and set him up

He had the case opened by this time struck a few chords and fell into an attitude which was irresistibly Spanish

Now he continued feel your voice Are you ready? Follow me!'

The guitar twanged and the two voices upraised in harmony and with startling loudness, the chorus of a song of old Berangers —

*"Commissaire! Commissaire!
Colin bat sa menagere,"*

The stones of Castel-le Gachis thrilled at this audacious innovation Hitherto had the night been sacred to repose and nightcaps, and now what was this? Window after window was opened matches scratched and candles began to flicker swollen sleepy faces peered forth into the starlight There were the two figures before the Commissary's house each bolt upright with head thrown back and eyes interrogating the starry heavens, he guitar wailed shouted and reverberated like half an orchestra, and the voices with a crisp and spirited delivery, hurled the appropriate burden at the Commissary's window All the echoes repeated the functionary's name It was more like an entr'acte in a farce of Moliere's than a passage of real life in Castel le Gachis

The Commissary if he was not the first was not the last of the neighbours to yield to the influence of music and furiously threw open the window of his bedroom He was beside himself with rage He leaned far over the window sill raving and gesticulating the tassel of his white night cap danced like a thing of life he opened his mouth to dimensions hitherto unprecedented and yet his voice, instead of escaping from it in a roar came forth shrill and choked and tottering A little more serenading and it was clear he would be better acquainted with the apoplexy

I scorn to reproduce his language, he touched upon too many serious topics by the way for a quiet story teller Although he was known for a man who

was prompt with his tongue and had a power of strong expression at command he excelled himself so remarkably this night that one maiden lady who had got out of bed like the rest to hear the serenade was obliged to shut her window at the second clause Even what she heard disquieted her conscience and next day she said she scarcely reckoned as a maiden lady any longer

Leon tried to explain his predicament but he received nothing but threats of arrest by way of answer

If I come down to you cried the Commissary

'Aye said Leon do'

'I will not' cried the Commissary

"You dare not" answered Leon

At that the Commissary closed his window

'All is over said the singer The serenade was perhaps ill judged These boors have no sense of humour

Let us get away from here ' said Elvira with a shiver 'All these people looking—it is so rude and so brutal And then giving way once more to passion— Brutes' she cried aloud to the candle lit spectators— brutes! brutes! brutes'

'Suave qui peut said Leon You have done it now'

And taking the guitar in one hand and the case in the other he led the way with something too precipitate to be merely called precipitation from the scene of this absurd adventure

IV

TO THE WEST of Castel le Gachis four rows of venerable lime trees formed in this starry night a twilit avenue with two side aisles of pitch darkness Here and there stone benches were disposed between the trunks There was not a breath of wind a heavy atmosphere of perfume hung about the alleys and every leaf stood stockstill upon its twig Hither after vainly knocking at an inn or two the Berthelinis came at length to pass the night After an amiable contention Leon insisted on giving his coat to Elvira and they sat down together on the first bench in silence Leon made a cigarette which he smoked to an end looking up into the trees and beyond them at the constellations of which he tried vainly to recall the names The silence was broken by the church bell it rang the four quarters on a light and tinkling measure then followed a single deep stroke that died slowly away with a thrill and stillness resumed its empire

One,' said Leon Four hours till daylight It is warm it is starry, I have matches and tobacco Do not let us exaggerate Elvira—the experience is positively charming I feel a glow within me I am born again This is the poetry of life Think of Cooper's novels my dear

Leon she said fiercely 'how can you talk such wicked infamous nonsense? To pass all night out of-doors—it is like a nightmare! We shall die

'You suffer yourself to be led away he replied soothingly It is not un-

pleasant here, only you brood Come now let us repeat a scene Shall we try Alceste and Celimene? No? Or a passage from the Two Orphans? Come, now, it will occupy your mind I will play up to you as I never have played before I feel art moving in my bones

'Hold your tongue she cried or you will drive me mad! Will nothing solemnise you—not even this hideous situation?

'Oh hideous' objected Leon Hideous is not the word Why where would you be? Dites la jeune belle ou voulez vous aller? he caroled Well now, he went on opening the guitar case there's another idea for you—sing Sing Dites la jeune belle! It will compose your spirits Elvira I am sure

And without waiting an answer he began to strum the symphony The first chords awoke a young man who was lying asleep upon a neighbouring bench 'Hullo!' cried the young man who are you?

"Under which king Zezonian? declaimed the artist 'Speak or die Or if it was not exactly that, it was something to much the same purpose from a French tragedy

The young man drew near in the twilight He was a tall powerful gentlemanly fellow with a somewhat puffy face dressed in a grey tweed suit with a deer-stalker hat of the same material, and as he now came forward he carried a knapsack slung upon one arm

Are you camping out here too? he asked, with a strong English accent "I'm not sorry for company

Leon explained their misadventure and the other told them that he was a Cambridge undergraduate on a walking tour that he had run short of money, could no longer pay for his night's lodgings had already been camping out for two nights and feared he should be required to continue the same manœuvre for at least two nights more

Luckily, it's jolly weather ' he continued

You hear that Elvira said Leon Madame Berthelini he went on is ridiculously affected by this trifling occurrence For my part I find it romantic and far from uncomfortable or at least he added shifting on the stone bench, not quite so uncomfortable as might have been expected But pray be seated

Yes returned the undergraduate sitting down it's rather nice than other wise when you're used to it only it's devilish difficult to get washed I like the fresh air and these stars and things

Aha! said Leon 'Monsieur is an artist'

An artist? returned the other, with a blank stare Not if I know it

Pardon me' said the actor 'What you said this moment about the orbs of heaven—'

Oh nonsense! cried the Englishman 'A fellow may admire the stars and be anything he likes'

You have an artist's nature however, Mr — I beg your pardon, may I, without indiscretion inquire your name? asked Leon

My name is Stubbs replied the Englishman

I thank you returned Leon Mine is Berthelini—Leon Berthelini ex artist of the theatres of Montrouge Belleville and Montmartre Humble as you see

me, I have created with applause more than one important *role*. The Press were unanimous in praise of my Howling Devil of the Mountains in the piece of the same name Madame whom I now present to you is herself an artist, and I must not omit to state a better artist than her husband. She also is a creator, she created nearly twenty successful songs at one of the principal Parisian music halls. But to continue I was saying you had an artist's nature, Monsieur Stubbs, and you must permit me to be a judge in such a question I trust you will not falsify your instincts let me beseech you to follow the career of an artist."

"Thank you" returned Stubbs with a chuckle. "I'm going to be a banker."

"No" said Leon "do not say so. Not that A man with such a nature as yours should not derogate so far. What are a few privations here and there so long as you are working for a high and noble goal?"

"This fellow's mad" thought Stubbs, "but the woman's rather pretty and he's not bad fun himself if you come to that." What he said was different "I thought you said you were an actor?"

I certainly did so" replied Leon "I am one or alas! I was."

"And so you want me to be an actor, do you?" continued the undergraduate. "Why man I could never so much as learn the stuff, my memory's like a sieve and as for acting I've no more idea than a cat."

"The stage is not the only course" said Leon "Be a sculptor, be a dancer, be a poet or a novelist follow your heart in short, and do some thorough work before you die."

"And do you call these things *art*?" inquired Stubbs.

"Why certainly" returned Leon "Are they not all branches?"

"Oh! I didn't know" replied the Englishman "I thought an artist meant a fellow who painted."

The singer stared at him in some surprise.

"It is the difference of language," he said at last "This Tower of Babel, when shall we have paid for it? If I could speak English you would follow me more readily."

"Between you and me I don't believe I should" replied the other "You seem to have thought a devil of a lot about this business. For my part I admire the stars and like to have them shining—it's so cheery—but hang me if I had an idea it had anything to do with art! It's not in my line you see I'm not intellectual. I have no end of trouble to scrape through my exams. I can tell you! But I'm not a bad sort at bottom," he added seeing his interlocutor looked distressed even in the dim starshine, "and I rather like the play, and music, and guitars and things."

Leon had a perception that the understanding was not incomplete. He changed the subject.

"And so you travel on foot?" he continued "How romantic! How courageous! And how are you pleased with my land? How does the scenery affect you among these wild hills of ours?"

"Well the fact is" began Stubbs—he was about to say that he didn't care for scenery which was not at all true being on the contrary only an athletic undergraduate pretension, but he had begun to suspect that Berthelini liked

a different sort of meat and substituted something else— The fact is I think it jolly They told me it was no good up here, even the guide book said so, but I don't know what they meant I think it is deuced pretty—upon my word, I do

At this moment in the most unexpected manner, Elvira burst into tears
 'My voice!' she cried 'Leon if I stay here longer I shall lose my voice'
 'You shall not stay another moment' cried the actor If I have to beat in a door if I have to burn the town I shall find you shelter

With that he replaced the guitar and comforting her with some caresses, drew her arm through his

Monsieur Stubbs said he, taking off his hat the reception I offer you is rather problematical, but let me beseech you to give us the pleasure of your society You are a little embarrassed for the moment you must indeed permit me to advance what may be necessary I ask it as a favour we must not part so soon after having met so strangely

'Oh come you know said Stubbs 'I can't let a fellow like you—' And there he paused feeling somehow or other on a wrong tack

'I do not wish to employ menaces' continued Leon with a smile "but if you refuse indeed I shall not take it kindly

I don't quite see my way out of it thought the undergraduate and then after a pause he said aloud and ungraciously enough All right I—I'm very much obliged of course And he proceeded to follow them thinking in his heart, But it's bad form all the same to force an obligation on a fellow "

V

LEON STRODE ahead as if he knew exactly where he was going the sobs of Madame were still faintly audible and no one uttered a word A dog barked furiously in a court yard as they went by then the church clock struck two, and many domestic clocks followed or preceded it in piping tones And just then Berthelini spied a light It burned in a small house on the outskirts of the town and thither the party now directed their steps

It is always a chance ' said Leon

The house in question stood back from the street behind an open space part garden part turnip field and several outhouses stood forward from either wing at right angles to the front One of these had recently undergone some change An enormous window, looking towards the north had been effected in the wall and roof and Leon began to hope it was a studio

If it's only a painter he said with a chuckle ten to one we get as good a welcome as we want

I thought painters were principally poor ' said Stubbs

"Ah' cried Leon you do not know the world as I do The poorer the better for us'

And the trio advanced into the turnip field

The light was in the ground floor, as one window was brightly illuminated

and two others were faintly it might be supposed that there was a single lamp in one corner of a large apartment and a certain tremulousness and temporary dwindling showed that a live fire contributed to the effect The sound of a voice now became audible and the trespassers paused to listen It was pitched in a high angry key but had still a good full and masculine note in it The utterance was voluble too voluble even to be quite distinct a stream of words rising and falling with ever and again a phrase thrown out by itself, as if the speaker reckoned on its virtue

Suddenly another voice joined in This time it was a woman's, and if the man were angry the woman was incensed to the degree of fury There was that absolutely blank composure known to suffering males, that colourless unnatural speech which shows a spirit accurately balanced between homicide and hysterics the tone in which the best of women sometimes utter words worse than death to those most dear to them If Abstract Bones-and Sepulchre were to be endowed with the gift of speech thus and not otherwise would it dis course? Leon was a brave man and I fear he was somewhat skeptically given (he had been educated in a Papistical country) but the habit of childhood prevailed and he crossed himself devoutly He had met several women in his career It was obvious that his instinct had not deceived him for the male voice broke forth instantly in a towering passion

The undergraduate who had not understood the significance of the woman's contribution pricked up his ears at the change upon the man

There's going to be a free fight he opined

There was another retort from the woman still calm but a little higher

'Hysterics?' asked Leon of his wife Is that the stage direction?

'How should I know?' returned Elvira somewhat tartly

'Oh woman woman!' said Leon beginning to open the guitar case It is one of the burdens of my life Monsieur Stubbs they support each other they always pretend there is no system, they say it's nature Even Madame Berthelini who is a dramatic artist!

'You are heartless Leon said Elvira that woman is in trouble'

And the man my angel? inquired Berthelini, passing the ribbon of his guitar And the man, *ma amour*?

He is a man she answered

You hear that? said Leon to Stubbs 'It is not too late for you Mark the intonation And now he continued what are we going to give them?

Are you going to sing? asked Stubbs

I am a troubadour replied Leon 'I claim a welcome by and for my art If I were a banker could I do as much?

'Well you wouldn't need you know answered the undergraduate

Egad said Leon but that's true Elvira that is true

'Of course it is she replied Did you not know it?

'My dear answered Leon impressively I know nothing but what is agreeable Even my knowledge of life is a work of art superiorly composed But what are we to give them? It should be something appropriate

Visions of Let dogs delight passed through the undergraduate's mind, but

it occurred to him that the poetry was English and that he did not know the air Hence he contributed no suggestion

Something about our houselessness, said Elvira

"I have it," cried Leon And he broke forth into a song of Pierre Dupont's —

*"Savez vous ou gite
Mais, ce joli mois?"*

Elvira joined in so did Stubbs with a good ear and voice but an imperfect acquaintance with the music Leon and the guitar were equal to the situation The actor dispensed his throat notes with prodigality and enthusiasm and as he looked up to heaven in his heroic way tossing the black ringlets it seemed to him that the very stars contributed a dumb applause to his efforts and the universe lent him its silence for a chorus That is one of the best features of the heavenly bodies, that they belong to everybody in particular, and a man like Leon a chronic Endymion who managed to get along without encouragement is always the world's centre for himself

He alone—and it is to be noted he was the worst singer of the three—took the music seriously to heart and judged the serenade from a high artistic point of view Elvira on the other hand was preoccupied about their reception and, as for Stubbs, he considered the whole affair in the light of a broad joke

'Know you the lair of May the lovely month?' went the three voices in the turnip-field

The inhabitants were plainly fluttered the light moved to and fro strength ening in one window paling in another, and then the door was thrown open and a man in a blouse appeared on the threshold carrying a lamp He was a powerful young fellow with bewildered hair and beard wearing his neck open, his blouse was stained with oil colours in a harlequinesque disorder and there was something rural in the droop and bagginess of his belted trousers

From immediately behind him and indeed over his shoulder a woman's face looked out into the darkness it was pale and a little weary although still young it wore a dwindling disappearing prettiness soon to be quite gone and the expression was both gentle and sour and reminded one faintly of the taste of certain drugs For all that it was not a face to dislike when the prettiness had vanished it seemed as if a certain pale beauty might step in to take its place, and as both the mildness and the asperity were characters of youth, it might be hoped that with years both would merge into a constant brave and not unkindly temper

What is all this?" cried the man

VI

LEON HAD HIS HAT in his hand at once He came forward with his customary grace, it was a moment which would have earned him a round of cheering on the stage Elvira and Stubbs advanced behind him like a couple of Admetus's sheep following the god Apollo

'Sir,' said Leon 'the hour is unpardonably late and our little serenade has the air of an impertinence Believe me sir it is an appeal Monsieur is an artist I perceive We are here three artists benighted and without shelter, one a woman—a delicate woman—in evening dress—in an interesting situation This will not fail to touch the woman's heart of Madame whom I perceive indistinctly behind Monsieur her husband and whose face speaks eloquently of a well regulated mind Ah! Monsieur Madame—one generous movement and you make three people happy! Two or three hours beside your fire—I ask it of Monsieur in the name of Art—I ask it of Madame by the sanctity of womanhood

The two as by a tacit consent drew back from the door

Come in said the man

Entrez Madame said the woman

The door opened directly upon the kitchen of the house which was to all appearance the only sitting room The furniture was both plain and scanty but there were one or two landscapes on the wall handsomely framed as if they had already visited the committee rooms of an exhibition and been thence extruded Leon walked up to the pictures and represented the part of a connoisseur before each in turn with his usual dramatic insight and force The master of the house as if irresistibly attracted followed him from canvas to canvas with the lamp Elvira was led directly to the fire where she proceeded to warm herself while Stubbs stood in the middle of the floor and followed the proceedings of Leon with mild astonishment in his eyes

You should see them by daylight said the artist

I promise myself that pleasure said Leon You possess, sir, if you will permit me an observation the art of composition to a T'

You are very good returned the other 'But should you not draw nearer to the fire?

With all my heart said Leon

And the whole party was soon gathered at the table over a hasty and not an elegant cold supper washed down with the least of small wines Nobody liked the meal but nobody complained they put a good face upon it, one and all and made a great clattering of knives and forks To see Leon eating a single cold sausage was to see a triumph, by the time he had done he had got through as much pantomime as would have sufficed for a baron of beef and he had the relaxed expression of the over eaten

As Elvira had naturally taken a place by the side of Leon and Stubbs as naturally although I believe unconsciously by the side of Elvira, the host and hostess were left together Yet it was to be noted that they never addressed a word to each other nor so much as suffered their eyes to meet The interrupted skirmish still survived in ill feeling, and the instant the guests departed it would break forth again as bitterly as ever The talk wandered from this to that subject—for with one accord the party had declared it was too late to go to bed but those two never relaxed towards each other, Goneril and Regan in a sisterly tiff were not more bent on enmity

It chanced that Elvira was so much tired by all the little excitements of the

night that for once she laid aside her company manners which were both easy and correct and in the most natural manner in the world leaned her head on Leon's shoulder At the same time fatigue suggesting tenderness she locked the fingers of her right hand into those of her husband's left and half closing her eyes dozed off into a golden borderland between sleep and waking But all the time she was not aware of what was passing and saw the painter's wife study ing her with looks between contempt and envy

It occurred to Leon that his constitution demanded the use of some tobacco and he undid his fingers from Elvira's in order to roll a cigarette It was gently done and he took care that his indulgence should in no other way disturb his wife's position But it seemed to catch the eye of the painter's wife with a special significance She looked straight before her for an instant and then with a swift and stealthy movement took hold of her husband's hand below the table Alas! she might have spared herself the dexterity For the poor fellow was so overcome by this caress that he stopped with his mouth open in the middle of a word and by the expression of his face plainly declared to all the company that his thoughts had been diverted into other channels

If it had not been rather amiable it would have been absurdly droll His wife at once withdrew her touch but it was plain she had to exert some force Thereupon the young man coloured and looked for a moment beautiful

Leon and Elvira both observed the byplay and a shock passed from one to the other for they were inveterate match makers, especially between those who were already married

I beg your pardon said Leon suddenly I see no use in pretending Before we came in here we heard sounds indicating—if I may so express myself—an imperfect harmony

Sir— began the man.

But the woman was before hand

It is quite true she said I see no cause to be ashamed If my husband is mad I shall at least do my utmost to prevent the consequences Picture to yourself Monsieur and Madame she went on for she passed Stubbs over that this wretched person—a dauber an incompetent not fit to be a sign painter—receives this morning an admirable offer from an uncle—an uncle of my own my mother's brother, and tenderly beloved—of a clerkship with nearly a hundred and fifty pounds a year and that he—picture to yourself!—he refuses it! Why? For the sake of Art he says Look at his art I say—look at it! Is it fit to be seen? Ask him—is it fit to be sold? And it is for this Monsieur and Madame that he condemns me to the most deplorable existence without lux uries without comforts in a vile suburb of a country town O non! she cried 'non—je ne me tairai pas—c'est plus fort que moi! I take these gentlemen and this lady for judges—is this kind? is it decent? is it manly? Do I not deserve better at his hands after having married him and'—(a visible hitch)—done everything in the world to please him?

I doubt if there were ever a more embarrassed company at a table, every one looked like a fool and the husband like the biggest

'The art of Monsieur however said Elvira breaking the silence, 'is not wanting in distinction

It has this distinction said the wife that nobody will buy it'

I should have supposed a clerkship— began Stubbs

Art is Art swept in Leon I salute Art It is the beautiful the divine it is the spirit of the world and the pride of life But— And the actor paused A clerkship— began Stubbs

I'll tell you what it is said the painter I am an artist as this gentleman says Art is this and the other but of course if my wife is going to make my life a piece of perdition all day long I prefer to go and drown myself out of hand

'Go' said his wife I should like to see you'

'I was going to say resumed Stubbs that a fellow may be a clerk and paint almost as much as he likes I know a fellow in a bank who makes capital water colour sketches he even sold one for seven and six

To both the women this seemed a plank of safety each hopefully interrogated the countenance of her lord, even Elvira an artist herself—but indeed there must be something permanently mercantile in the female nature The two men exchanged a glance it was tragic not otherwise might two philosophers salute as at the end of a laborious life each recognised that he was still a mystery to his disciples

Leon arose

Art is art he repeated sadly 'It is not water colour sketches, nor practising on a piano It is a life to be lived

And in the meantime people starve' observed the woman of the house If that's a life it is not one for me

I'll tell you what burst forth Leon you Madame go into another room and talk it over with my wife and I'll stay here and talk it over with your husband It may come to nothing but let's try

I am very willing replied the young woman and she proceeded to light a candle This way if you please And she led Elvira upstairs into a bedroom 'The fact is said she sitting down that my husband cannot paint

No more can mine act replied Elvira

I should have thought he could returned the other he seems clever'

He is so and the best of men besides said Elvira but he cannot act"

'At least he is not a sheer humbug like mine he can at least sing

'You mistake Leon returned his wife warmly He does not even pretend to sing he has too fine a taste he does so for a living And believe me neither of the men are humbugs They are people with a mission—which they cannot carry out

Humbug or not replied the other you came very near passing the night in the fields and for my part, I live in terror of starvation I should think it was a man's mission to think twice about his wife But it appears not Nothing is their mission but to play the fool Oh! she broke out is it not something dreary to think of that man of mine? If he could only do it, who would care? But no—not he—no more than I can'

Have you any children? asked Elvira

No but then I may

Children change so much' said Elvira with a sigh

And just then from the room below there flew forth a sudden snapping chord on the guitar one followed after another, then the voice of Leon joined in and there was an air being played and sung that stopped the speech of the two women. The wife of the painter stood like a person transfixed. Elvira looking into her eyes could see all manner of beautiful memories and kind thoughts that were passing in and out of her soul with every note. It was a piece of her youth that went before her a green French plain the smell of apple flowers the far and shining ringlets of a river, and the words and presence of love.

Leon has hit the nail thought Elvira to herself I wonder how

The how was plain enough Leon had asked the painter if there were no air connected with courtship and pleasant times and having learnt what he wished, and allowed an interval to pass he had soared forth into

*"O mon amante,
O mon desir,
Sachons cueillir
L'heure charmante!"*

Pardon me Madame' said the painter's wife your husband sings admirably well

He sings that with some feeling replied Elvira critically although she was a little moved herself for the song cut both ways in the upper chamber, 'but it is as an actor and not as a musician

Life is very sad said the other 'it so wastes away under one's fingers 'I have not found it so replied Elvira I think the good parts of it last and grow greater every day

Frankly how would you advise me?

Frankly I would let my husband do what he wished He is obviously a very loving painter you have not yet tried him as a clerk And you know if it were only as the possible father of your children—it is as well to keep him at his best'

'He is an excellent fellow said his wife

They kept it up till sunrise with music and all manner of good fellowship and at sunrise while the sky was still temperate and clear they separated on the threshold with a thousand excellent wishes for each other's welfare. Castel le-Gachis was beginning to send up its smoke against the golden East and the church bell was ringing six

My guitar is a familiar spirit' said Leon as he and Elvira took the nearest way towards the inn it resuscitated a Commissary, created an English tourist and reconciled a man and wife

Stubbs, on his part went off into the morning with reflections of his own

They are all mad thought he all mad—but wonderfully decent

MARKHEIM

'Yes said the dealer 'our windfalls are of various kinds Some customers are ignorant and then I touch a dividend on my superior knowledge Some are dishonest and here he held up the candle so that the light fell strongly on his visitor and in that case he continued I profit by my virtue

Markheim had but just entered from the daylight streets and his eyes had not yet grown familiar with the mingled shine and darkness in the shop At these pointed words and before the near presence of the flame, he blinked painfully and looked aside

The dealer chuckled You come to me on Christmas Day' he resumed, 'when you know I am alone in my house, put up my shutters, and make a point of refusing business Well you will have to pay for that, you will have to pay for my loss of time when I should be balancing my books, you will have to pay besides for a kind of manner that I remark in you to day very strongly I am the essence of discretion and ask no awkward questions but when a customer cannot look me in the eye he has to pay for it The dealer once more chuckled and then changing to his usual business voice though still with a note of irony You can give as usual a clear account of how you came into the possession of the object' he continued 'Still your uncle's cabinet' A remarkable collector sir'

And the little pale round shouldered dealer stood almost on tip toe, looking over the top of his gold spectacles and nodding his head with every mark of disbelief Markheim returned his gaze with one of infinite pity, and a touch of horror

'This time said he "you are in error I have not come to sell but to buy I have no curios to dispose of my uncle's cabinet is bare to the wainscot, even were it still intact I have done well on the Stock Exchange and should more likely add to it than otherwise and my errand to day is simplicity itself I seek a Christmas present for a lady, he continued waxing more fluent as he struck into the speech he had prepared and certainly I owe you every excuse for thus disturbing you upon so small a matter But the thing was neglected yesterday, I must produce my little compliment at dinner, and, as you very well know, a rich marriage is not a thing to be neglected

There followed a pause during which the dealer seemed to weigh this statement incredulously The ticking of many clocks among the curious lumber of the shop and the faint rushing of the cabs in a near thoroughfare filled up the interval of silence

Well sir said the dealer 'be it so You are an old customer after all, and if, as you say, you have the chance of a good marriage far be it from me to be an obstacle Here is a nice thing for a lady now he went on, this hand glass—fifteenth century warranted comes from a good collection too but I reserve the name in the interests of my customer who was just like yourself, my dear sir the nephew and sole heir of a remarkable collector

The dealer while he thus ran on in his dry and biting voice, had stooped to

take the object from its place and as he had done so a shock had passed through Markheim a start both of hand and foot a sudden leap of many tumultuous passions to the face It passed as swiftly as it came and left no trace beyond a certain trembling of the hand that now received the glass

A glass he said hoarsely, and then paused and repeated it more clearly
A glass? For Christmas? Surely not?

And why not? cried the dealer Why not a glass?

Markheim was looking upon him with an indefinable expression 'You ask me why not?' he said 'Why, look here—look in it—look at yourself! Do you like to see it? No! nor I—nor any man'

The little man had jumped back when Markheim had so suddenly confronted him with the mirror but now perceiving there was nothing worse on hand, he chuckled Our future lady sir must be pretty hard favoured said he

I ask you said Markheim for a Christmas present and you give me this—this damned reminder of years and sins and follies—this hand conscience! Did you mean it? Had you a thought in your mind? Tell me It will be better for you if you do Come tell me about yourself I hazard a guess now that you are in secret a very charitable man?

The dealer looked closely at his companion It was very odd Markheim did not appear to be laughing there was something in his face like an eager sparkle of hope, but nothing of mirth

What are you driving at? the dealer asked

Not charitable? returned the other gloomily 'Not charitable not pious, not scrupulous unloving unbeloved a hand to get money, a safe to keep it Is that all? Dear God man is that all?

I will tell you what it is began the dealer with some sharpness and then broke off again into a chuckle But I see this is a love match of yours and you have been drinking the lady's health

Ah! cried Markheim with a strange curiosity Ah have you been in love? Tell me about that

I cried the dealer I in love! I never had the time nor have I the time to day for all this nonsense Will you take the glass?

Where is the hurry? returned Markheim It is very pleasant to stand here talking, and life is so short and insecure that I would not hurry away from any pleasure—no not even from so mild a one as this We should rather cling, cling to what little we can get like a man at a cliff's edge Every second is a cliff if you think upon it—a cliff a mile high—high enough if we fall to dash us out of every feature of humanity Hence it is best to talk pleasantly Let us talk to each other why should we wear this mask? Let us be confidential Who knows we might become friends?

I have just one word to say to you said the dealer 'Either make your purchase, or walk out of my shop!'

True true ' said Markheim Enough fooling To business Show me something else

The dealer stooped once more, this time to replace the glass upon the shelf his thin blond hair falling over his eyes as he did so Marlheim moved a little

nearer with one hand in the pocket of his greatcoat, he drew himself up and filled his lungs at the same time many different emotions were depicted together on his face—terror, horror, and resolve, fascination and a physical repulsion, and through a haggard lift of his upper lip his teeth looked out.

This perhaps may suit observed the dealer and then as he began to re-arise Markheim bounded from behind upon his victim. The long, skewerlike dagger flashed and fell. The dealer struggled like a hen striking his temple on the shelf and then tumbled on the floor in a heap.

Time had some score of small voices in that shop, some stately and slow as was becoming to their great age, others garrulous and hurried. All these told out the seconds in an intricate chorus of tickings. Then the passage of a lad's feet, heavily running on the pavement broke in upon these smaller voices and startled Markheim into the consciousness of his surroundings. He looked about him awfully. The candle stood on the counter, its flame solemnly wagging in a draught and by that inconsiderable movement the whole room was filled with noiseless bustle and kept heaving like a sea, the tall shadows nodding, the gross blots of darkness swelling and dwindling as with respiration, the faces of the portraits and the china gods changing and wavering like images in water. The inner door stood ajar and peered into that leaguer of shadows with a long slit of daylight like a pointing finger.

From these fear-stricken rovings Markheim's eyes returned to the body of his victim where it lay both humped and sprawling, incredibly small and strangely mannered than in life. In these poor miserly clothes in that ungainly attitude the dealer lay like so much sawdust. Markheim had feared to see it and lo! it was nothing. And yet as he gazed this bundle of old clothes and pool of blood began to find eloquent voices. There it must lie, there was none to work the cunning hinges or direct the miracle of locomotion—there it must lie till it was found. Found! ay, and then? Then would this dead flesh lift up a cry that would ring over England and fill the world with the echoes of pursuit. Ay, dead or not, this was still the enemy. Time was that when the brains were out he thought and the first word struck into his mind. Time now that the deed was accomplished—time which had closed for the victim had become instant and momentous for the slayer.

The thought was yet in his mind when first one and then another with every variety of pace and voice—one deep as the bell from a cathedral turret, another ringing on its treble notes the prelude of a waltz—the clocks began to strike the hour of three in the afternoon.

The sudden outbreak of so many tongues in that dumb chamber staggered him. He began to bestir himself, going to and fro with the candle beleaguered by moving shadows and startled to the soul by chance reflections. In many rich mirrors, some of home design, some from Venice or Amsterdam, he saw his face repeated and repeated, as it were an army of spies. His own eyes met and detected him and the sound of his own steps lightly as they fell vexed the surrounding quiet. And still as he continued to fill his pockets his mind accused him with a sickening iteration of the thousand faults of his design. He should have chosen a more quiet hour, he should have prepared an alibi,

he should not have used a knife he should have been more cautious and only bound and gagged the dealer, and not killed him he should have been more bold, and killed the servant also, he should have done all things otherwise poignant regrets, weary incessant toiling of the mind to change what was unchangeable to plan what was now useless to be the architect of the irrevo cable past Meanwhile and behind all this activity brute terrors like the scurry ing of rats in a deserted attic filled the more remote chambers of his brain with riot the hand of the constable would fall heavy on his shoulder and his nerves would jerk like a hooked fish or he beheld in galloping defile the dock the prison the gallows and the black coffin

Terror of the people in the street sat down before his mind like a besieging army It was impossible he thought, but that some rumour of the struggle must have reached their ears and set on edge their curiosity and now in all the neighbouring houses he divined them sitting motionless and with uplifted ear —solitary people, condemned to spend Christmas dwelling alone on memories of the past, and now startlingly recalled from that tender exercise happy fam ily parties struck into silence round the table and mother still with raised finger every degree and age and humour but all by their own hearths prying the hearkening and weaving the rope that was to hang him Sometimes it seemed to him he could not move too softly, the clink of the tall Bohemian goblets rang out loudly like a bell and alarmed by the bigness of the ticking, he was tempted to stop the clocks And then again with a swift transition of his terrors the very silence of the place appeared a source of peril and a thing to strike and freeze the passer by, and he would step more boldly and bustle aloud among the contents of the shop and imitate with elaborate bravado the movements of a busy man at ease in his own house

But he was now so pulled about by different alarms that while one portion of his mind was still alert and cunning another trembled on the brink of lunacy One hallucination in particular took a strong hold on his credulity The neighbour hearkening with white face beside his window the passer by arrested by a horrible surmise on the pavement—these could at worst suspect they could not know through the brick walls and shuttered windows only sounds could penetrate But here, within the house was he alone? He knew he was he had watched the servant set forth sweet hearting in her poor best out for the day written in every ribbon and smile Yes he was alone of course and yet in the bulk of empty house above him he could surely hear a stir of delicate footing—he was surely conscious inexplicably conscious of some presence Ay surely to every room and corner of the house his imagina tion followed it and now it was a faceless thing and yet had eyes to see with and again it was a shadow of himself, and yet again behold the image of the dead dealer reinspired with cunning and hatred

At times with a strong effort he would glance at the open door which still seemed to repel his eyes The house was tall the skylight small and dirty, the day blind with fog and the light that filtered down to the ground story was exceedingly faint and showed dimly on the threshold of the shop And yet in that strip of doubtful brightness did there not hang wavering a shadow?

Suddenly from the street outside a very jovial gentleman began to beat with a staff on the shop door accompanying his blows with shouts and railries in which the dealer was continually called upon my name Markheim smitten into ice glanced at the dead man But no' he lay quite still he was fled away far beyond earshot of these blows and shoutings, he was sunk beneath seas of silence and his name which would once have caught his notice above the howling of a storm had become an empty sound And presently the jovial gentleman desisted from his knocking and departed

Here was a broad hint to hurry what remained to be done, to get forth from this accusing neighbourhood to plunge into a bath of London multitudes and to reach on the other side of day that haven of safety and apparent innocence —his bed One visitor had come at any moment another might follow and be more obstinate To have done the deed and yet not to reap the profit would be too abhorrent a failure The money, that was now Markheim's concern and as a means to that the keys

He glanced over his shoulder at the open door where the shadow was still lingering and shivering, and with no conscious repugnance of the mind yet with a tremor of the belly he drew near the body of his victim The human character had quite departed Like a suit half stuffed with bran the limbs lay scattered the trunk doubled on the floor and yet the thing repelled him Although so dingy and inconsiderable to the eye he feared it might have more significance to the touch He took the body by the shoulders, and turned it on its back It was strangely light and supple and the limbs as if they had been broken fell into the oddest postures The face was robbed of all expression but it was as pale as wax and shockingly smeared with blood about one temple That was for Markheim, the one displeasing circumstance It carried him back upon the instant to a certain fair day in a fishers village a gray day a piping wind a crowd upon the street the blare of brasses the booming of drums the nasal voice of a ballad singer and a boy going to and fro buried over head in the crowd and divided between interest and fear until coming out upon the chief place of concourse he beheld a booth and a great screen with pictures dismaly designed garishly coloured Brownrigg with her apprentice the Mannings with their murdered guest Weare in the death grip of Thurtell and a score besides of famous crimes The thing was as clear as an illusion he was once again that little boy, he was looking once again and with the same sense of physical revolt at these vile pictures he was still stunned by the thumping of the drums A bar of that day's music returned upon his memory and at that for the first time a qualm came over him a breath of nausea a sudden weakness of the joints, which he must instantly resist and conquer

He judged it more prudent to confront than to flee from these considerations, looking the more hardly in the dead face bending his mind to realise the nature and greatness of his crime So little a while ago that face had moved with every change of sentiment, that pale mouth had spoken, that body had been all on fire with governable energies and now and by his act that piece of life had been arrested as the horologist with interlocked finger, arrests the beat

ing of the clock So he reasoned in vain he could rise to no more remorseful consciousness the same heart which had shuddered before the painted effigies of crime looked on its reality unmoved At best he felt a gleam of pity for one who had been endowed in vain with all those faculties that can make the world a garden of enchantment one who had never lived and who was now dead But of penitence no not a tremor

With that shaking himself clear of these considerations he found the keys and advanced towards the open door of the shop Outside it had begun to rain smartly and the sound of the shower upon the roof had banished silence Like some dripping cavern the chambers of the house were haunted by an incessant echoing which filled the ear and mingled with the ticking of the clocks And as Markheim approached the door he seemed to hear in answer to his own cautious tread the steps of another foot withdrawing up the stair The shadow still palpitated loosely on the threshold He threw a ton's weight of resolve upon his muscles and drew back the door

The faint foggy daylight glimmered dimly on the bare floor and stairs on the bright suit of armour posted halbert in hand upon the landing and on the dark wood carvings and framed pictures that hung against the yellow panels of the wainscot So loud was the beating of the rain through all the house that in Markheim's ears it began to be distinguished into many different sounds Footsteps and sighs, the tread of regiments marching in the distance the chink of money in the counting and the creaking of doors held stealthily ajar appeared to mingle with the patter of the drops upon the cupola and the gushing of the water in the pipes The sense that he was not alone grew upon him to the verge of madness On every side he was haunted and begirt by presences He heard them moving in the upper chambers from the shop he heard the dead man getting to his legs and as he began with a great effort to mount the stairs feet fled quietly before him and followed stealthily behind If he were but deaf he thought how tranquilly he would possess his soul! And then again and hearkening with every fresh attention he blessed himself for that unresting sense which held the outposts and stood a trusty sentinel upon his life His head turned continually on his neck his eyes which seemed starting from their orbits scouted on every side and on every side were half rewarded as with the tail of something nameless vanishing The four and twenty steps to the first floor were four and twenty agonies

On that first storey the doors stood ajar three of them like three ambuses shaking his nerves like the throats of cannon He could never again he felt be sufficiently immured and fortified from men's observing eyes he longed to be home girt in by walls buried among bedclothes and invisible to all but God And at that thought he wondered a little recollecting tales of other murderers and the fear they were said to entertain of heavenly avengers It was not so at least with him He feared the laws of nature lest in their callous and immutable procedure they should preserve some damning evidence of his crime He feared tenfold more with a slavish superstitious terror some scission in the continuity of man's experience, some wilful illegality of nature He played a game of skill, depending on the rules calculating consequence from cause and

what if nature as the defeated tyrant overthrew the chess-board should break the mould of their succession? The like had befallen Napoleon (so writers said) when the winter changed the time of its appearance. The like might befall Markheim the solid walls might become transparent and reveal his doings like those of bees in a glass hive the stout planks might yield under his foot like quicksands and detain him in their clutch ay and there were sober-accidents that might destroy him if for instance the house should fall and imprison him beside the body of his victim or the house next door should fly on fire and the firemen invade him from all sides These things he feared and in a sense these things might be called the hands of God reached forth against sin But about God Himself he was at ease, his act was doubtless exceptional but so were his excuses which God knew, it was there and not among men that he felt sure of justice

When he had got safe into the drawing room and shut the door behind him, he was aware of a respite from alarms The room was quite dismantled un carpeted besides and strewn with packing cases and incongruous furniture several great pier glasses in which he beheld himself at various angles like an actor on a stage many pictures framed and unframed standing with their faces to the wall a fine Sheraton sideboard a cabinet of marquetry and a great old bed with tapestry hangings The windows opened to the floor but by great good fortune the lower part of the shutters had been closed and this concealed him from the neighbours Here then Markheim drew in a packing case before the cabinet and began to search among the keys It was a long business for there were many and it was irksome besides for after all there might be nothing in the cabinet and time was on the wing But the closeness of the occupation sobered him With the tail of his eye he saw the door—even glanced at it from time to time directly like a besieged commander pleased to verify the good estate of his defences But in truth he was at peace The rain falling in the street sounded natural and pleasant Presently on the other side the notes of a piano were wakened to the music of a hymn and the voices of many children took up the air and words How stately how comfortable was the melody! How fresh the youthful voices! Markheim gave ear to it smilingly, as he sorted out the keys and his mind was thronged with answerable ideas and images church going children and the pealing of the high organ children field bathers by the brookside ramblers on the brambly common kite flyers in the windy and cloud navigated sky and then at another cadence of the hymn back again to church and the somnolence of summer Sundays and the high genteel voice of the parson (which he smiled a little to recall) and the painted Jacobean tombs, and the dim lettering of the Ten Commandments in the chancel

And as he sat thus at once busy and absent he was startled to his feet A flash of ice a flash of fire a bursting gush of blood went over him and then he stood transfixed and thrilling A step mounted the stair slowly and steadily and presently a hand was laid upon the knob and the lock clicked and the door opened

Fear held Markheim in a vice What to expect he knew not whether the dead

man walking, or the official ministers of human justice or some chance witness blindly stumbling in to consign him to the gallows. But when a face was thrust into the aperture glanced round the room looked at him nodded and smiled as if in friendly recognition and then withdrew again and the door closed behind it his fear broke loose from his control in a hoarse cry. At the sound of this the visitant returned.

Did you call me? he asked pleasantly, and with that he entered the room and closed the door behind him.

Markheim stood and gazed at him with all his eyes. Perhaps there was a film upon his sight, but the outlines of the new comer seemed to change and waver like those of the idols in the wavering candlelight of the shop and at times he thought he knew him, and at times he thought he bore a likeness to himself and always, like a lump of living terror there lay in his bosom the conviction that this thing was not of the earth and not of God.

And yet the creature had a strange air of the commonplace as he stood looking on Markheim with a smile and when he added You are looking for the money I believe? it was in the tones of every day politeness.

Markheim made no answer.

'I should warn you,' resumed the other, that the maid has left her sweet heart earlier than usual and will soon be here. If Mr. Markheim be found in this house, I need not describe to him the consequences.'

You know me? cried the murderer.

The visitor smiled. You have long been a favourite of mine he said and I have long observed and often sought to help you.

What are you? cried Markheim the devil?

'What I may be,' returned the other, cannot affect the service I propose to render you.

It can! cried Markeim, it does! Be helped by you? No never not by you! You do not know me yet thank God, you do not know me!

I know you replied the visitant with a sort of kind severity or rather firmness 'I know you to the soul.'

Know me! cried Markheim. Who can do so? My life is but a travesty and slander on myself. I have lived to belie my nature. All men do all men are better than this disguise that grows about and stifles them. You see each dragged away by life like one whom bravos have seized and muffled in a cloak. If they had their own control—if you could see their faces they would be altogether different, they would shine out for heroes and saints! I am worse than most myself is more overlaid, my excuse is known to me and God. But, had I the time I could disclose myself.

'To me?' inquired the visitant.

'To you before all' returned the murderer. I supposed you were intelligent I thought—since you exist—you would prove a reader of the heart. And yet you would propose to judge me by my acts! Think of it my acts! I was born and I have lived in a land of giants. Giants have dragged me by the wrists since I was born out of my mother—the giants of circumstances. And you would judge me by my acts! But can you not look within? Can you

not understand that evil is hateful to me? Can you not see within me the clear writing of conscience, never blurred by any wilful sophistry although too often disregarded? Can you not read me for a thing that surely must be common as humanity—the unwilling sinner?

All this is very feelingly expressed was the reply but it regards me not These points of consistency are beyond my province and I care not in the least by what compulsion you may have been dragged away so as you are but carried in the right direction But time flies the servant delays looking in the faces of the crowd and at the pictures on the hoardings but still she keeps moving nearer and remember it is as if the gallows itself was striding towards you through the Christmas streets! Shall I help you, I, who know all? Shall I tell you where to find the money?

For what price? asked Markheim

I offer you the service for a Christmas gift, returned the other Markheim could not refrain from smiling with a kind of bitter triumph No, said he I will take nothing at your hands if I were dying of thirst and it was your hand that put the pitcher to my lips I should find the courage to refuse It may be credulous but I will do nothing to commit myself to evil

'I have no objection to a deathbed repentance observed the visitant

Because you disbelieve their efficacy! Markheim cried

I do not say so returned the other but I look on these things from a different side and when the life is done my interest falls The man has lived to serve me to spread black looks under colour of religion or to sow tares in the wheat fields as you do in a course of weak compliance with desire Now that he draws so near to his deliverance he can add but one act of service—to repent to die smiling and thus to build up in confidence and hope the more timorous of my surviving followers I am not so hard a master Try me Accept my help Please yourself in life as you have done hitherto please yourself more amply spread your elbows at the board, and when the night begins to fall and the curtains to be drawn I tell you for your greater comfort that you will find it even easy to compound your quarrel with your conscience and make a truckling peace with God I came but now from such a deathbed and the room was full of sincere mourners listening to the man's last words and when I looked into that face which had been set as a flint against mercy I found it smiling with hope

And do you then suppose me such a creature?" asked Markheim. "Do you think I have no more generous aspirations than to sin and sin and sin and at the last sneak into heaven? My heart rises at the thought. Is this then, your experience of mankind? or is it because you find me with red hands that you presume such baseness? and is this crime of murder indeed so impious as to dry up the very springs of good?

"Murder is to me no special category ' replied the other ' All sins are murder even as all life is war I behold your race like starving mariners on a raft plucking crusts out of the hands of famine and feeding on each other's lives I follow sins beyond the moment of their acting I find in all that the last

consequence is death and to my eyes the pretty maid who thwarts her mother with such taking graces on a question of a ball drips no less visibly with human gore than such a murderer as yourself Do I say that I follow sins? I follow virtues also they differ not by the thickness of a nail they are both scythes for the reaping angel of Death Evil for which I live consists not in action but in character The bad man is dear to me not the bad act, whose fruits if we could follow them far enough down the hurtling cataract of the ages, might yet be found more blessed than those of the rarest virtues And it is not because you have killed a dealer, but because you are Markheim that I offer to forward your escape

I will lay my heart open to you ' answered Markheim 'This crime on which you find me is my last On my way to it I have learned many lessons itself is a lesson a momentous lesson Hitherto I have been driven with revolt to what I would not I was a bond-slave to poverty driven and scourged There are robust virtues that can stand in these temptations mine was not so I had a thirst of pleasure But to day, and out of this deed I pluck both warning and riches—both the power and a fresh resolve to be myself I become in all things a free actor in the world I begin to see myself all changed these hands the agents of good this heart of peace Something comes over me out of the past something of what I have dreamed on Sabbath evenings to the sound of the church organ of what I forecast when I shed tears over noble books or talked an innocent child with my mother There lies my life I have wandered a few years but now I see once more my city of destination

' You are to use this money on the Stock Exchange I think' remarked the visitor and there if I mistake not you have already lost some thousands'

' Ah said Markheim but this time I have a sure thing

This time, again you will lose replied the visitor quietly

"Ah but I keep back the half" cried Markheim

That also you will lose said the other

The sweat started upon Markheim's brow 'Well then what matter' he exclaimed Say it be lost say I am plunged again in poverty shall one part of me and that the worse continue until the end to override the better? Evil and good run strong in me haling me both ways I do not love the one thing I love all I can conceive great deeds renunciations martyrdoms and though I be fallen to such a crime as murder pity is no stranger to my thoughts I pity the poor who knows their trials better than myself? I pity and help them I prize love I love honest laughter there is no good thing nor true thing on earth but I love it from my heart And are my vices only to direct my life, and my virtues to lie without effect like some passive lumber of the mind? Not so, good also, is a spring of acts

But the visitant raised his finger 'For six and thirty years that you have been in this world said he through many changes of fortune and varieties of humour I have watched you steadily fall Fifteen years ago you would have started at a theft Three years back you would have blenched at the name of murder Is there any crime is there any cruelty or meanness from which you still recoil?—five years from now I shall detect you in the fact! Down-

ward downward lies your way nor can anything but death avail to stop you'

It is true' Markheim said huskily I have in some degree complied with evil But it is so with all the very saints in the mere exercise of living grow less dainty and take on the tone of their surroundings

I will propound to you one simple question said the other 'and as you answer I shall read to you your moral horoscope You have grown in many things more lax possibly you do right to be so and at any account, it is the same with all men But granting that are you in any one particular however trifling more difficult to please with your own conduct or do you go in all things with a looser rein'

In any one³ repeated Markheim, with an anguish of consideration "No, he added with despair 'in none' I have gone down in all

Then ' said the visitor content yourself with what you are for you will never change, and the words of your part on this stage are irrevocably written down

Markheim stood for a long while silent, and indeed it was the visitor who first broke the silence That being so he said shall I show you the money?

And grace³ cried Markheim

Have you not tried it³ returned the other 'Two or three years ago did I not see you on the platform of revival meetings and was not your voice the loudest in the hymn'

It is true said Markheim and I see clearly what remains for me by way of duty I thank you for these lessons from my soul my eyes are opened and I behold myself at last for what I am

At this moment the sharp note of the door bell rang through the house and the visitant as though this were some concerted signal for which he had been waiting changed at once in his demeanour

The maid¹ he cried She has returned as I forewarned you and there is now before you one more difficult passage Her master you must say is ill you must let her in with an assured but rather serious countenance—no smiles no overacting and I promise you success! Once the girl within, and the door closed the same dexterity that has already rid you of the dealer will relieve you of this last dinger in your path Thenceforward you have the whole evening—the whole night if needful—to ransack the treasures of the house and to make good your safety This is help that comes to you with the mask of danger Up! he cried up friend your life hangs trembling in the scales up and act!

Markheim steadily regarded his counsellor If I be condemned to evil acts he said there is still one door of freedom open—I can cease from action If my life be an ill thing I can lay it down Though I be as you say truly at the beck of every small temptation I can yet by one decisive gesture place myself beyond the reach of all My love of good is damned to barrenness, it may and let it be! But I have still my hatred of evil, and from that to your galling disappointment you shall see that I can draw both energy and courage

The features of the visitor began to undergo a wonderful and lovely change they brightened and softened with a tender triumph and, even as they bright-

ened, faded and dislimned But Markheim did not pause to watch or understand the transformation He opened the door and went downstairs very slowly, thinking to himself His past went soberly before him, he beheld it as it was, ugly and strenuous like a dream, random as chance medley—a scene of defeat Life, as he thus reviewed it, tempted him no longer but on the farther side he perceived a quiet haven for his bark He paused in the passage, and looked into the shop where the candle still burned by the dead body It was strangely silent Thoughts of the dealer swarmed into his mind as he stood gazing And then the bell once more broke out into impatient clamour He confronted the maid upon the threshold with something like a smile "You had better go for the police ' said he I have killed your master "

